

THE TRUE CHURCH;
ITS WAY OF JUSTIFICATION,
ITS HOLY COMMUNION.

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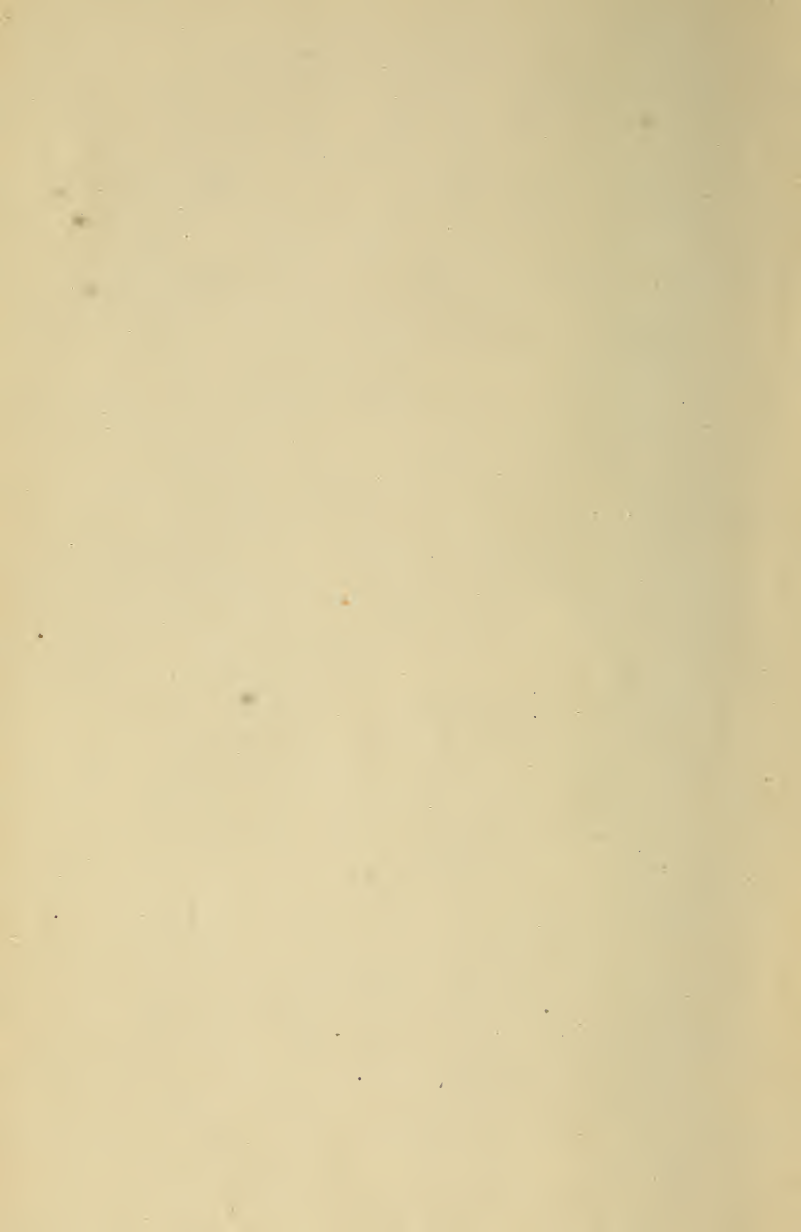
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THE

TRUE CHURCH:

ITS

WAY OF JUSTIFICATION;

AND ITS

HOLY COMMUNION.

IN THREE DISCOURSES.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

THESE Discourses, delivered on several occasions of public interest in the Church, are here presented in a permanent form, in the hope that they may not be unproductive of good results, in aiding our church members to give an answer to the inquirer, concerning the Church we love, the Faith we hold, and the Holy Communion we receive; and in promoting, above all else, the glory of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, of whose Church we are members, by whose Righteousness we are justified, and in whose Holy Sacrament we have blessed fellowship with His own divine life.

E. G.

LANCASTER, PA.,
October 31, 1875.







THE TRUE CHURCH.*

"I speak concerning Christ and the Church."—EPH. 5 : 32.

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning."—1 JOHN 2 : 7.

MUCH stress is laid by the members of the Church of Rome upon the question of the True Church, and very properly, too, for the question is one of great importance. It is not a matter of indifference whether we belong to the True Church, or not. Every one is interested in learning the marks of the True Church, and none should rest satisfied to be in any other than the True Church.

The question of the True Church has had very great prominence given to it, of late, in the minds of Christians, both in Europe and America. The

* Preached in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Centreville, Pa., Rev. B. F. Apple, Pastor, October 31, 1874.

discussion of it is met with in the ponderous volume, in the winged tract, and in the weekly paper. I have met with it in numerous instances, among educated and uneducated persons, when visiting in different, and quite opposite, sections of a very large parish. The question has, in every instance, been urged upon the attention of our members by their neighbors belonging to the Church of Rome. In every instance, they have asserted that theirs alone is the True Church; that ours is not the True Church; that they are safe because they belong to the True Church; and the effort is insidiously and persistently made to cause our members to feel unsafe and dissatisfied because they do not belong to the True Church. So often has this question come to my attention, of late, as to leave the conviction on the mind that it is a part of a general and well-matured plan of operations by which to attack the Church of the Reformation. I feel that the question deserves attention, and ought to be met in a thorough and candid discussion of it, for the information of our members, and to enable them to parry the attacks made upon their faith and their Church. It is particularly an

appropriate theme on a centennial occasion such as this,* and in view of the anniversary of the Reformation by Luther, which the Church always celebrates on the 31st of October. It is, at such a time, very timely and very appropriate to inquire into the reasons why we believe that we are the True Church of Christ. I shall discuss the theme with my accustomed earnestness and plainness of speech, but whilst I do so firmly, I shall not forget to do it kindly.

I shall speak, as on such an occasion I have a right to do, of the Lutheran Church. It is the Church of the Reformation. For many years the Augsburg Confession was the only Protestant Confession that was everywhere recognized as such. The Protestant Church was the Lutheran Church. It is much to be regretted, for the credit and for the interests of Protestantism, that the Augsburg Confession was not everywhere retained as the only Protestant Confession, and the Church of the Reformation the only Protestant Church,

* The occasion on which this discourse was preached was the Centennial Festival of the Lutheran Church at Centreville, held during the week including the 31st of October.

so as now, and always, to present a united front to the powerful hierarchy of the Church of Rome.

But whilst I shall speak of the Church of the Reformation directly, and defend its claims to be the True Church, I feel that I am defending the claims of our common Protestantism that holds true Christian faith, cultivates true Christian life, and practices true Christian duties. I am sorry that I must say, in all candor, that not all that calls itself Protestant, possesses this character. There is some Protestantism that is very unsound in doctrine, and that preaches quite another Gospel than that which Christ, and Paul, and Luther preached. It is a species of semi-infidelity, boasts itself of its rationalism, and makes human reason, and not God's Word, the rule of its faith. It takes away the divinity from Christ, and renounces salvation by the atonement on the cross; is proud, sensational, worldly, unchurchly, unsacramental, schismatical, and human. It professes to be Protestant and free, but it is no credit to either Protestantism or true liberty. It has done, and is doing, more to lead some men to conclude that Protestantism is a failure, and the Reforma-

tion a mistake, than all the efforts of either Romanists or Infidels. In, therefore, offering arguments in behalf of the Church of the Reformation as being the True Church, I do not include such a spurious Protestantism as this. On the contrary, whatever I may think of the claims of the Church of Rome to be the True Church, I am sure that this spurious, half-infidel Protestantism, is not the True Church.

In order that we may have a proper comprehension of the whole subject, we must first inquire, What is the Church?

The answer is: "The Church is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity, and the Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel."

This is the definition given in our Augsburg Confession, and it is the true one. The Greek word is "Ecclesia," and means an assembly, a congregation, a community, a convocation of people called out from the rest of mankind. *Ek, kaleo,* means called out, and was used by the Greeks to mean the same as our words *convoke,* or called together. It is, therefore, rightly called in our

Augsburg Confession, "An assembly." As there are many assemblies, or organizations of different sorts, it next tells us what kind of an assembly it is. It is an "Assembly of believers."

The Church must, of course, be an assembly "of believers." It is not an assembly of unbelievers of any sort. The kind of believers that constitute the Christian Church must, of course, be Christian believers; believers in Christianity, believers in Christ, believers in the true Gospel, believers in the true doctrines of the Word of God. All such believers in the faith and doctrines of Christ, and that associate together as confessors of that faith, compose the True Christian Church.

The essential characteristics of a True Church, according to this definition, is that "the Gospel must be preached in its purity, and the sacraments administered according to the divine institution."

1. *There must be the true doctrine.*

Impure doctrine makes an impure Church. There cannot be a sound Church if the faith is unsound. Soundness of the faith, and soundness of the Church, are absolutely identical and necessary to

each other. A Church, like a home, is constituted, not so much by the bricks and timbers of the house, as by the people that inhabit it. If a Church was a sound Church whilst it held sound doctrine, it may, and will, become an unsound Church if it becomes unsound in the faith. A Church is a true Church if it holds true doctrines. If it holds false doctrines, and tolerates unchristian practices, it is a false, and not a true Church. It is the nature of the faith, and of the practice that flows from that faith, that constitutes the nature of the Church. It is true or false, just as its faith and practice are true or false. The Jewish Church, in the time of Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and Daniel, was a true Church, but in the time of the Pharisees, when it crucified the Saviour, and persecuted the apostles, it was no longer a true Church. The Churches in Asia Minor were true Churches when Peter wrote to them his first Epistle, and could speak of them as "elect of God," "having faith unto salvation," "being begotten again unto a lively hope," "having a faith more precious than gold," "being built up a spiritual house on the chief corner-stone, elect, precious,"

which is Christ. But those of them were no longer true Churches, when, in his second Epistle, he was compelled to denounce their "false teachers," their "damnable heresies," their "denying the Lord that bought them," their "having eyes full of adultery," "that could not cease from sin;" and to call them, "Cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Baalim son of Bosor." The Church at Rome was a True Church, when Paul was its pastor, and such saints as Priscilla and Aquila, Andronicus and Junia, Tryphena and Tryphosa, and Urbane, and Apelles, and Narcissus, and Persis, and Rufus, and a host of others, true believers, and sound Christians, were its members. But it ceased to be a True Church when the Infidel Leo X. was Pope, Tetzal was seller of indulgences, forgiveness of sins was sold for money, justification by works was substituted for justification by faith, the worship of Mary superseded the worship of Christ, penance took the place of repentance, and the grossest corruption prevailed everywhere among popes, priests, monks, nuns, and people. For a Church to be true, its faith, and practice,

and religious life must be true. If these are false, and untrue, and corrupt, it ceases to be a true Church. Every one can understand, and must admit, the force of these facts, and the conclusiveness of these reasons.

2. *This definition of the True Church requires the Sacraments to be rightly administered.*

There must be the true number, the true doctrine concerning their nature, and they must be rightly administered to the proper persons. They are two and not seven, as to their number. They have each two elements, an earthly and a heavenly, or a visible and invisible, that are not changed into each other, but remain two natures whilst constituting one Sacrament, and, therefore, there can be no transubstantiation. They must be administered to all the communicants alike, in both kinds, to the laity as well as to the priest, so that all that commune receive the complete Sacrament. We commit an unwarrantable innovation upon Christ's institution if we add five Sacraments to the two which he instituted. We, with unwarrantable presumption, change one of

the Sacraments altogether if we take away the bread, or which is the same thing, transubstantiate it into the substance of the body of Christ, so as to leave no bread whatever remaining. And we, with censurable boldness, defraud the congregation of a part of the Sacrament when we take from them the cup and give them the bread only. In all these respects the Sacrament is not rightly administered according to the institution and pattern of Christ, the divine Founder of the Church. The True Church adheres most strictly, in all points, to Christ's institutions, because the Sacraments are vital to the very existence of the Church. That Church ceases to be the True Church that lays its presumptuous hands upon the holy institutions of Christ, and changes their number, their nature, their elements, or their subjects.

This definition of the Church, as laid down in our venerable Augsburg Confession, is so certainly sound and correct, that no opponent, however disposed, can by any possibility refute it. Sound doctrine and the divine sacraments, truly believed, and professed, and held, and practiced, as Christ, the great Head of the Church, has himself taught,

and ordained, and commanded, and instituted them, are necessary to constitute the True Church. A great and powerful external organization called a church, does not constitute a true Christian Church, if the true faith, and the true sacraments, and true Christian life, are wanting. Every one who gives the subject the smallest consideration will admit the correctness of this position.

Mohammedanism is not the True Church. Why not? Not for the want of a large and powerful external organization, that is just about as old as the Pope of Rome. Mohammedanism has its pope, called the Caliph, who is the "acknowledged successor of Mohammed, and is invested with supreme dignity and power in all things relating to religion and civil polity." As the Pope claims to be the vicegerent of Christ, and the visible head of the Christian church on earth, so the Caliph claims to be the successor and representative on earth of Mohammed as the Prophet of God, and the head of the church of all good Mussulmans. The Caliphs claim their dignity, and power, and position, almost in the very words in which the Pope claims his. And their organization is immensely vast

and powerful, for there is very little difference between the number of adherents of the Caliph and that of the Pope. But this external organization, and headship, and numbers, and powerful claims, do not constitute Mohammedanism the True Church. Why not? The answer is plain. It has not the true faith, nor the right sacraments, nor the correct practice.

We may cite a very apposite case much nearer home. Mormonism claims to be the True Church. It has its pope, its organization, its members, its ordinances, and is such a wealthy and powerful institution, that it has been able to defy the laws and government of the United States. But Mormonism is not the True Church. Why not? The answer is plain. It has not the true faith, nor the right sacraments, nor correct practice. These constitute the True Church, and where they are wanting, the True Church is wanting; and no organization of whatever kind, that has not the true Christian faith, nor the true Christian sacraments, nor the true Christian practice that results therefrom, is the True Christian Church.

We must distinguish between the nature of

things. Mere names and outward appearances are not enough. We must go into the interior of all institutions, whether civil or religious, and ascertain what are their principles, their nature, their real character, and we must judge them from what they really are.

Let us now go more into detail, in the examination of the claims of the Church of the Reformation, to be the True Church, as over against the Church of Rome. It must be borne in mind, that we are not the aggressors in this contest, nor are we taking the offensive; but we are acting strictly on the defensive, and are asserting claims that are being denied and called in question every day. We are simply maintaining our right to exist, in answer to those who are everywhere—in public and in private—denying that we have any right to live. If our claim to be the True Christian Church cannot be maintained, then we ought not to live. A false or untrue Church has no right to exist.

What, then, are our claims to be the True Church?

1. *We are the True Church, because we have the True Head of the Church.*

There is, and can be, but one Head of the Christian Church. That Head is Christ. It is a divine and not a human Head. No *man* can be the Head of the Christian Church. It is a divine institution, and, therefore, must have a divine Head. It cannot have two heads, the one divine and the other human. This would be a two-headed monster, and not the True Christian Church. Nowhere has Christ given us the least intimation that He has appointed any human head, any vicegerent, any representative man, any one to act in His stead on earth, as the Head of the Church. He occupies that position, and He alone; and He has nowhere announced that He has vacated that position, or given that honor to another. It is contended that Peter was made the head of the church, and that his successors are the earthly representatives of Christ. But the well-known, and oft-quoted, passage, says nothing of the kind. "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." Even if we grant the interpretation which our Romish friends

put upon it, the passage says nothing of the kind. It speaks of "Peter," but it says nothing of his successors. It speaks of a "rock" on which the church will be "built," but the rocky foundation is a very different thing from the "head" of the Church. The passage says nothing about a "head." The builder is the head, not the foundation on which he builds. Even if Peter was meant personally, and he was called the rock on which the Church was to be built, it would only say, what is elsewhere said, that the Church is "built on the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone" It would only say that the Church is founded on the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, which we all believe, and which none disputes. Even then, allowing the popish interpretation of this passage, it says nothing whatever of a human head of the Church—of a vicegerent of Christ on earth—of a pope to whom the whole Christian Church in the world must be subject, and without whom there is no True Church. But even this cannot be allowed.

It will be interesting to my hearers to learn what is said on this passage by intelligent and

candid Roman writers themselves. It is well known, that the decree of the Infallibility of the Pope, voted by the council that held its sessions in Rome a few years ago, has met with much opposition from intelligent Roman Catholics themselves, such as Dr. Dollinger, Hyacinthe, Reinkens, and others. Several of the most learned of its opponents within the Romish Church have published a work entitled "The Pope and the Council, by Janus." It is a work of great ability. I know you will give your closest attention, whilst I quote from it the following passage, p. 74. "Of all the fathers [of the first 600 years after Christ, p. 76] who interpret these passages in the Gospels, Matthew 16, 18—John, 21, 17—the words of Christ to Peter, *not a single one applies them to the Roman bishops as Peter's successors*. How many fathers have busied themselves with these texts, yet not one of them, whose commentary we possess—Origen, A. D. 230; Chrysostom, A. D. 370; Hilary, A. D. 360; Augustine, A. D. 390; Cyril, A. D. 350; Theodoret, A. D. 400—and those whose interpretations are collected in catenas, has dropped the faintest hint, that the primacy of Rome is the

consequence of the commission and promise to Peter! Not one of them has explained the rock, or foundation on which Christ would build His Church, of the office given to Peter to be transmitted to his successors; but they understood by it either Christ himself, or Peter's confession of faith in Christ, or both together. Or, else they thought Peter was the foundation equally with all the apostles—the twelve being together the foundation stones of the church. (Rev. 21 : 14,—‘ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.’) The fathers could the less recognize in the power of the keys, and the power of binding and loosing, any special prerogative or lordship of the Roman bishop, inasmuch as—what is obvious to any one at first sight—they did not regard a power first given to Peter, and afterwards conferred in precisely the same words on all the apostles (Matthew 16 : 19; 18 : 18) as anything peculiar to him, or hereditary in the line of Roman bishops.”

So far the book from which I quote. It is not often that we meet with such candid statements

as these; and it proves that the truth of history will force itself to be heard from the lips of candid and intelligent men, who love truth more than party. It establishes the position with which I set out, that whilst we refuse to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome, we are, nevertheless, the True Church, because we have Christ, the true Head of the Church, and are built upon the true foundation of the apostles and prophets, Peter among the rest.

2. We are the True Old Church, because we have the True Church succession.

Luther was not a schismatic, nor is the Lutheran Church a sect. The Church of the Reformation is the true and proper development of the true Christian Church life, and in the way of the True Church succession. The true old Church arose, at the Reformation, out of the errors and corruptions that had loaded it down for ages, and shaking them off, appeared the same old True Church, cleansed and purified. The Reformation was not a revolution so much as it was a development. Luther did not create the times, but the times

created Luther. Washington did not make the American Revolution, but the Revolution made Washington. The country called for Washington, and he came. So it was not Luther that made the Reformation so much as the Church oppressed, and groaning, and struggling to rise, wanted a suitable leader to help it up, and God raised the true man of the times, that the times called for. It was the Church itself that did its own reforming. If the Church had not been struggling up from beneath its grievous oppressions, Luther could have done nothing, and his feeble voice would never have been heard, or would soon have been drowned and forgotten. In all great movements in Church or State, there is, first, the condition of things that is ripe for the movement, and then the right man in the right place, is always found to lead the movement and give it direction and success. Such was the glorious Reformation of the 16th Century, known as the Lutheran Reformation.

It was not the rising up of one man, or a few men, or of one or a few Churches, in one place or a few places. But it was the spontaneous rising

up of hundreds and thousands of men, of whole nations of Churches; and when the rule, and the errors, and the corruptions in doctrine and practice of Rome and its pope were cast off, the regular routine of Church life moved on almost as uninterruptedly as if nothing had occurred to disturb the even progress of affairs.

There was no breaking of the succession in the ministry, in the Church organizations, in the ordination of pastors, in the preaching of the Word, in the participation of the Sacraments, in the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, or in any of the regular public and private acts of Christian Church life. In most of the parishes of Germany, the same pastors that had ministered to the congregations under papal rule, renouncing the pope and the errors of popery, remained still the pastors of the same people who had become Protestant. Their successors were educated, ordained, and appointed as they had been, and the succession thus continued has remained to this day.

This is particularly true as regards the countries of Sweden, of Denmark, and of Norway. Here

the whole nation, as by one act, cast off the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome, and the Churches and pastors, almost as one man, embraced the Reformation. No break in the succession occurred anywhere. The succession was as regular as when one wave succeeds another; as when one joint of the wheat stem follows another; or as when the child is born to his father, and inherits the father's name, and the father's homestead. It was the spectacle of three entire nations of Churches rising and casting off the foul yoke that, not God, but man had imposed on them, and then moving on in its purified Church life, as if nothing wonderful had occurred. It was the same old Church, the same line of descent, the True Church afterward as before, much more the True Church afterward than before, because it had cast off what had been false and untrue, and its faith and practice were now the pure truth of God.

So too, we may cite the case of the Church of England. The 39 Articles and the Liturgy of the Church of England are almost transcripts of the Augsburg Confession and the Lutheran Liturgies. Archbishop Cranmer was in constant correspon-

dence with Melanchthon, and earnestly invited him to England, and Melanchthon would have gone to England if the Elector of Saxony would have permitted him. Both the Articles and the Liturgy of the Church of England are mainly Lutheran. Here, too, there was no break in the succession. By one act the entire nation cast off the popish rule, and then moved on as it had done before. Bishops, presbyters, deacons, and Church members were the same persons the day after, that they had been the day before. The stream, it is true, rippled a little at the spot, and from a crooked channel it turned into a straight one, but it was, nevertheless, the same stream. It was the old stream that had run on from the time that God started it, and there was no break in the succession of its waters. It was the True Old Church, truer because of the Reformation than it had been before. It lost by the Reformation, not one element of the True Church, but gained a much stronger element of truth than it had possessed before.

We are, therefore, the True Church, because we have the true succession. The succession has not

been interrupted. There has been no break in it. It is the same living tree, with its roots grounded away back in the good soil of Jesus and the apostles. It is the same living stream that started in the pool under the temple in Jerusalem. It is the same life which God breathed into its nostrils; it never ceased to breathe, and it breathes with more vigorous and healthy life since the Reformation than it did for centuries before.

3. *We are the True Church because we have the true faith.*

We have the same old Apostles' Creed, says Luther, in his admirable and well-known dissertation on the True Church, the old faith of the old Church that has been held, believed, repeated, and confessed from the beginning. Nothing has been taken from it, and nothing added to it; but we repeat it now as it was repeated from the time of the death of the last of the apostles. Our children are baptized in it now, as they were then. Our Catechumens ratify it at their Confirmation now, as they did then. And in our stated Sunday services we repeat it, at morning and at evening

worship, now, as it was then. We hold to every article of it, and suffer no innovation therein. All our subsequent confessions, and catechisms, and symbols are only the full and complete development of this old Apostles' Creed of the Church catholic. We are, therefore, the True Church, because we hold the true old faith of the Apostles' Creed, which the True Church has held from the beginning.

With the old True Church we also have the Nicene Creed; and in it, with this holy church through the centuries, we profess our faith in "One Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God—begotten of His Father before all worlds—God of God—Light of Light—very God of very God—begotten, not made—consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made." In these noble words we utter our faith and hope when partaking of the Holy Supper, in which He, who is the Life of the world, gives Himself to us for the nourishment of His own divine life in our souls. As the True Catholic Church in all ages has confessed this faith, we who belong to the same have not ceased to confess it. We are,

therefore, parts of the body of true orthodox confessors, and members of the True Church, the conservator of our holy faith, by which we must be saved.

We also hold, with the true old church of the fathers, the Athanasian Creed, as the third chief symbol, in which we confess concerning the Godhead, the true doctrine of the Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and concerning the Son of God, "who although He be God and man, is yet not two, but one, Christ—one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the humanity into God—one altogether—not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person." We have and hold this true faith as it has been held and professed by the True Holy Catholic Church in all the years of its purity; and, therefore, having the True old Faith, we belong to the True old Church of Christ.

And we have the Augsburg Confession, which is the true and consistent development of the true old faith of the true old church. In it, we have not brought forth another faith, or changed any

part of the old true faith, but have only, thereby, corrected the errors, and rectified the abuses, by which pope and priests had for so long a time corrupted the True, Holy Church of the Fathers. In no one point of doctrine have we, in this noble Augustana, departed from the faith of the Holy Catholic Church of the first centuries, but the greatest and most successful care has been taken, in the words themselves of this Magna Charta of Protestantism, "in order that it might be the more clearly perceived, that by us nothing is received, either in doctrine or ceremonies, which might be contrary to the Holy Scriptures, or opposed to the universal Christian Church. For it is clear, indeed, and evident, that with the greatest vigilance, by the help of God, we have been careful that no new or ungodly doctrine insinuate itself, spread, and prevail in our churches." We hold, therefore, and cherish the one old true faith, of the true old church, which was proclaimed in the beginning, and have neither added anything to it, nor taken anything away from it; and, consequently, having the true old Faith, we have the True old Church of God.

4. *We are the True Church, because we have the True, Old, Apostolic, Christian Baptism.*

By Baptism we are incorporated into Christ, made members of His Church, translated from the Kingdom of nature into the Kingdom of grace, made subjects of Christ's Kingdom, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance. An unbaptized person is not a member of the Christian Church. By Baptism, as the divinely appointed initiatory Sacrament, a person is initiated, or brought into the Church. This has always been so, and it is so now. In all missionary operations, as well as in the regular parochial routine of home Church life, it is Baptism that initiates old and young, upon whom it is administered, into the Church. It was so with the first candidate that was baptized by Peter and the other apostles, on the day of Pentecost, and it is so with the child, or the adult that has been baptized to-day. Being baptized with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is made a member of Christ, and of the Christian Church. Not man's rite nor an ordinance appointed by Pope or Council, but God's own holy Sacrament makes us members of His Church.

We are all so baptized. All our forefathers were so baptized before us. In regular, unbroken succession, with no defective link, our baptism goes up from the present members of the Church, to the first members that were baptized on the day of Pentecost. It is not a new Baptism, invented by us, or by Luther, or invented in our day, or at the time of the Reformation, but it is the "selfsame old Baptism instituted by Christ, and in which the Apostles, the primitive Church, and all Christians after them, have ever been baptized to this day." —*Luther*. Were they thereby made members of the True Church? So are we. It is the Baptism of the old primitive Church, it has the same efficacy now as then; it is administered in the same way, in the same name, and initiates now as then, into the same old, primitive, apostolic, true, Christian Church.

5. *We are the True Church because we have the true Lord's Supper.*

We have the same two elements, the one earthly, and the other heavenly—the earthly being bread and wine, and the heavenly being the body and

blood of Christ—as Christ himself constituted it. We take bread and wine as Christ did, and we say, “Take, eat, this is my body,” and “Take, drink ye all of it, this is my Blood,” as Christ said. We believe too, as his disciples believed, as he himself taught us, and as they also teach, that “the cup which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.” We take Christ’s words as he uttered them, and we believe that which they express. We do not attempt to explain them otherwise than according to their plain and obvious meaning, nor do we fritter away their force, by giving them an interpretation which makes them a mere figure of speech. It is, what Christ himself has made it, and as Luther in his Small Catechism declares it to be, “The true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ himself.” We retain, too, the whole sacrament, for whilst we receive the body of Christ, we do not destroy the bread, as the false doctrine of transubstantiation necessarily does. Neither do we

give to the lay members of the Church, only a part of a Sacrament, as they do who withhold the cup from the people. Of these false doctrines, and of these impious innovations, the old primitive Church knew nothing, but held and administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as we now hold concerning it, and as we now administer it. We say, therefore, with Luther, "We have the Holy Sacrament of the Altar even as it was instituted by Christ himself, and as it was used by the Apostles, and by all Christendom after them," until the Church of Rome corrupted it. "We have introduced nothing new therein," but have the same old, pure, true body and blood, under the true bread and wine, as the apostles, and the true, old Church of Christ, always had.

6. *We are the True Church because we have the true ministry.*

We have the old, twofold call to the ministry. First, *of God*—"For no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." Secondly, *of the Church*, for when the first congregation numbered only one hundred and

twenty members at Jerusalem, and there was a vacancy in the apostleship occasioned by the death of Judas, they all "gave forth their lots, and the vote fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Christ, who has instituted the office of the ministry, and who, with the other "gifts" which He "gave unto men when He ascended up on high," included "pastors and teachers for the edifying of His body," the Church, still calls men into this holy office, and has so called them from the beginning. And the Church, too, which is the congregation of believers, having the keys of the kingdom given to it, and its members being "a royal priesthood," has the power, and has ever exercised it, to call and ordain ministers to preach the Gospel, and to administer the holy Sacraments. This twofold call, which the old True Church had, we still have, and have always had. We have, therefore, the true ministry of the True Church. But we accept no lordly pope as vicegerent of Christ on earth, for Christ appointed none, and the True old Church knew of none. Nor do we submit to a despotic hierarchy, that puts all ecclesiastical

power into the hands of corrupt and tyrannical bishops and priests, by which men's consciences are oppressed, their liberties destroyed, and both the Church and the State are made captive to the outrageous pretensions of vain and proud men who arrogate to themselves the power and infallibility that belong to God only. Such an oppressive hierarchy Christ did not institute, and the True old Church knew nothing of. As to ministerial succession, we have the true, regular succession, for from the ordinations of the apostles, down through all the centuries to our own immediate times, there has been no break or interruption of the succession in the ranks of the ministry. If the ministry in Germany, and Sweden, and Denmark, and Norway, and England, was a regular ministry up to the time of the Reformation, their successors through the three centuries since must be also regular, for the succession passed from one to the other in the same regular way, and with the same twofold call. We have, therefore, the true, old ministry, and the True old Church of the apostles and prophets, among whom the line of succession began.

7. *We are the True Church because we have the real old keys.*

Christ gave the keys of the kingdom, or Church, not to Peter only, but to all the apostles; and not to one only, but to all of their successors, with authority to use them to open or to shut the Church to men. By this is meant the power to admit into the Church worthy persons, and to exclude unworthy persons from it. The notion that the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to one man, and that man the Pope of Rome, for him to open and to shut the kingdom of heaven to whom he will, was never held until the year A. D. 845, when it was foisted upon the Church by a wicked forgery, known in Church History as the "Isidorean Decretals." It is directly opposed to the Word of God, which tells us that Jesus gave the power to bind and to loose, to all the apostles: Matth. 18:18. It is an outrageous imposition, and has been made the pretext for the worst tyranny, the most high-handed oppression, and the cruelest injustice, on the part of the Pope of Rome, that the world ever witnessed. "We have the real old keys, and use them," says Luther, to open the

kingdom to believing and penitent sinners, and to shut against unbelievers and hardened offenders, "as Christ instituted and designed them, and as the apostles and all Christendom have used them unto this day. As, therefore, we have the keys and their use, with the old Church, we are the selfsame old Church." "We make no new keys," nor impose a new yoke, such as neither the Church nor the apostles imposed, nor our fathers were able to bear; neither do we use these keys, which were intended only for spiritual uses, to dethrone kings, and burn and slay with fagot and stake, with torture and gibbet, as in the days of popish power. But we use them as the old Church did, to admit worthy men into, or to exclude unworthy men from, Christ's Church or spiritual kingdom, as the old Church did, by the command of the Lord. We have, therefore, the old, true apostolic Church, because like the old, true, and apostolic Church, we have the real old keys, and use them as the old, true, and apostolic Church used them.

8. *We are the True Church because we have, and hold, the true Word of God.*

God's Word is the only rule of faith and practice for men. It is the only infallible guide and teacher. Man may err, but God can never err. We are directed to go "to the law and to the testimony, and if we speak not according to this Word, there is no life in us." Neither is it man's Bible, but God's Bible. The force of a plain passage of God's Word is sought to be evaded by the flippant reply, "Yes, so it reads in your Bible," as if we had made the Bible. No, it is God's Word, and not man's word, and we have it in our hands, just as Christ spoke it, and the apostles wrote it, and the old primitive Church read it, and all Christendom, from that time to this, believed and practiced it. Like them, we ground our faith on God's Word, we believe nothing that it condemns, and we reject nothing that it reveals. We have it pure and true as it came from the mouth of God himself, in the very words in which He inspired it, and clothed with infallible divine authority. "We," says Luther, "teach it diligently among us, without any addition of new or human doctrines, even as Christ himself commanded and taught it, and as the Apostles and the primitive Church always did.

We invent nothing new, but continue steadfastly to hold to the old Word of God, as the old Church had it. We are, therefore, the real old Church, and as the one and the same old and true Church, we believe and teach the same old and true Word of God."

9. *We are the True Church, because we have the true cross, and the way of salvation by it.*

We have not the wooden cross, and Christ on a crucifix, but the real and true cross, and a living Christ who was crucified, but who is risen again, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. We adore not so much the cross, as we adore Him who was crucified on it, and bore our sins, and cleanseth us from all sin by His blood. We do not take Christ off the cross and put our own merits, and works, and penances, and righteousness instead of His. Neither do we displace Christ from his office of intercessor for us with the Father, and put Mary and the saints in His place. But counting, with St. Paul, as dung all our own merits, and works, and righteousness, we make mention

of Christ's righteousness, and His only ; and casting down at the foot of the cross all our vanity, and pride, and self-exaltation, all hope of salvation by any and all human means and methods, all saintly intercession, all purgatorial purification, all works of supererogation, all merit secured by bodily penances and mortifications, we look up to Christ crucified for us, as our wisdom and righteousness, our sanctification and redemption, our all in all, everything we need for our justification before God, and our inheritance of the bliss of heaven. This is the only and the old way of salvation for the world. It was the way of Paul and of Peter, and of all the apostles, and of the primitive church, and of all Christendom in its purest and best state. With the old church we confess, "that there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus," alone. With the old church we declare, "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." With the old church we testify, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in

Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." So believing, and so trusting, and so confessing, we are of the True old Church of Christ, in which we have salvation and eternal life, by the abundant grace and mercy that flow to the humble believer from the cross of Christ.

10. *We are the True Church, because in it we have the true happy deathbeds of the saints.*

This is the great final test. In the True Church we have peaceful deathbeds. The grace which we therein receive takes the sting from death, and the terror from the grave. We therein learn how to die, as well as how to live. With the True old Church we can say, in the language of her sainted martyrs, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory, which the righteous Judge shall give me at that day." With the old True Church we can exclaim, with her dying saints, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks

be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." In this good old church the purest devotion has always been cultivated, and has flourished from the first; the holiest, and most self-denying, and most eminently useful lives have been everywhere exhibited; and the sweetest, happiest, and most blessed, deathbeds are constantly witnessed. If we are not safe in this church, we are not safe anywhere. If this is not the True Church, there is no true church. If in this church the soul cannot find rest and peace, there is no rest nor peace for it anywhere on the earth. If in this church the soul cannot be fitted for heaven, it is in vain to hope for such fitness in any other. Particularly, with this pure faith, and these blessed sacraments, and this sure way of justification, and this ancient order, and this right practice, in this True Church, at the head of which sits in glorious majesty our divine Lord Jesus Christ, I would not entertain the thought, even for a single moment, of exchanging my chances of salvation for a place in the church at the head of which sits the Pope of Rome.

I have Christ's church. I am sure of it. Christ's

church is the True Church. With Christ at the head of it, I know I am safe. I would not feel safe in a church with a man at the head of it. Even though he claim to be infallible, I have no proof of it; but many proofs to the contrary. I am satisfied, therefore, to remain where I am; and I would not exchange my faith and hope for any that the Church of Rome can offer me in their stead. With the great and good Luther, at the Diet of Worms, I must now and always say, and with the same positiveness and feeling of certainty with which he said it,—“Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me!” Amen.



JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.*

“The just shall live by faith.”—ROM. 1 : 17.

OUR text furnishes us with a theme that is eminently appropriate both to the place and to the occasion. This house has been erected as a Christian Church, and we are assembled on the occasion of its solemn consecration. This has just been formally done, in the presence of the congregation, by whose pious zeal its walls have been reared. It has been dedicated as a Christian Church, for the preservation and furtherance of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is declared to be distinctively a Lutheran Church, in which “the doctrines of Christ may be preached according to the Confessions of our Evangelical Lutheran Church, His

* Preached at the consecration of the Church of the Holy Communion, J. A. Seiss, D.D., Pastor, February 17, 1875.

holy Sacraments rightly administered, and His religion handed down to the latest generations." Chief among the doctrines of our holy Christianity, and prominent before all others in the Confessions and history of the Lutheran Church, is the doctrine of Justification by Faith. The doctrine of Justification by Faith in the atonement for sin effected for us by the obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ, distinguishes Christianity from all other religions in the world. And the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, was the turning-point of the Reformation; it was the experience of its necessity and efficacy in the heart of Martin Luther that constituted his best qualification for the work of the Reformation; and as it distinguished the Lutheran Church from the Church of Rome, so it has come to be regarded as the distinguishing mark of separation between Protestantism and Romanism. Of all the texts, too, that announce the doctrine, that which I have named at the head of this discourse did as much, perhaps, as any other single passage, to give shape both to the experience and to the theology of the great Reformer. During the spiritual conflict of his soul

at Erfurt, and his terrible sickness at Bologna, and his eventful visit to Rome and his effort there to ascend St. Peter's staircase on his knees, these words of Paul, like a ray of light from heaven, dispersed from his mind both spiritual doubt and Romish superstition. It is eminently suitable, therefore, that the doctrine of Justification by Faith, which this text announces, should be taken as the subject for consideration in the first discourse, following the dedication sermon this morning, in a house designed by its founders to be "Ein Feste Burg," for the propagation and defence of the doctrines of the Reformation.

"The just shall live by faith."

Let us, first, enter briefly into an exegetical examination of this passage. The entire verse reads—"For therein"—*i. e.*, as expressed in the preceding verse, in "the Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"—"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith." This is quoted from Habakkuk 2:4.

The life, expressed in the words "shall live," is undoubtedly eternal life. It is the opposite of eternal death. It is explained in the previous verse as "salvation," and in the following verse as the opposite of, or deliverance from, "the wrath of God." They that "live" in the sense here spoken of, are saved from the "wrath of God," *i. e.*, from the condemnation which the law of God denounces upon the transgressor. It is the same life referred to by the apostle in the passage, Rom. 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And again, in Rom. 5:21, "As sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." It is also the same life to which Jesus himself refers when he says, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

They who thus "live," are here called "the just." This word, as it occurs in this passage, is used in the sense of "justified." A similar use occurs in Job 9:2; where the question is asked,

“How should man be just with God?” The import is, “How should man be justified—pronounced just—judicially acquitted before God?”

To be made just—pronounced just—justified before God—is asserted in the text to be “by faith.” It is not on account of any innocence possessed, or works wrought, by the person, that he is declared to be “just,”—not on account of any merit in him, but by “faith” in a merit outside of him. As faith and works are always placed in opposition to each other by the apostle, when speaking of the way of salvation, his intention here, as elsewhere, is to teach that a man is “just with God” by faith as distinct from works, or by a righteousness other than his own, and that is reckoned to him by faith as the instrument of its appropriation.

This righteousness which is appropriated by faith, and on account of which the man who believes is pronounced “just,” and the effect of which is that he “lives,” *i. e.*, has eternal life, is in this verse distinctly declared to be “the righteousness of God.” “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” It is the same righteous-

ness which the apostle uniformly mentions as the ground of our Justification. Thus in Rom. 3: 20—22. “Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe.” And in Rom. 10: 3, 4. “For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” And in Phil. 3: 9. “That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

The plain import of this passage is therefore this: Man is justified before God, and has eternal life, not on account of his own righteousness, but by faith in the righteousness of God, which is acquired for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. We are

just, *i. e.*, justified, by faith, and the effect is, we shall live, or have eternal life. The great theme announced in this precious passage is,

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

I invite your attention to the discussion of,

The Nature,

The Ground, and

The Means of Justification.

In the consideration of *The Nature of Justification*, it is important that we endeavor to form a distinct conception of the subject, apart from its connection with any other. Among many other benefits, Christianity proposes to do two prominent things for man. It proposes to produce a *personal change in his moral nature*, and to effect a *judicial change in his state or relation to the law and government of God*. The one we call Sanctification, and the other we term Justification. Sanctification is a change of the heart, Justification is a change of state. The opposite of Sanctification is unholiness; the contrary of Justification is condemnation. Sanctification removes the pollution of our moral

nature occasioned by indwelling sin, Justification takes away the condemnation which God inflicts upon the guilty transgressor of His holy law. Whilst Sanctification is the work of holiness, begun at regeneration, and continuing through life, and is not complete until its subject is perfected in heaven, Justification is a forensic or judicial act by which the Judge acquits from the charge of guilt, and removes the sentence of condemnation that rested upon the transgressor. The two things are essentially distinct, and it is of the highest importance to the formation of correct sentiments concerning them, that we keep them separate in our thinking of them.

Let us examine a few passages in order to ascertain whether this distinction between Sanctification and Justification is recognized in the Scriptures, and particularly whether Justification is to be taken in this judicial sense. In Prov. 17: 15, we read, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord." If to justify a wicked man, meant to make him a righteous and good man, it is not conceivable how it could be an abomination

to the Lord. It is plain that it means to pronounce a wicked man free from guilt or blame, to clear him from merited punishment, to declare him to be just, righteous, and innocent, notwithstanding his being a wicked man, and thus imports a sort of judicial proceeding. This passage alone is sufficient to teach us that Justification is something quite different from Sanctification, and that it evidently does not mean the making of a man morally righteous. The making of a man morally righteous must necessarily take place, but that is the work of Sanctification; Justification means something else.

Let us take another passage. In Job 9 : 2, 3, we read : "How shall man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." Here the word "just" is used, not in reference to personal character, but to indicate the judicial relation of man with God. If God will "contend," *i. e.*, enter into a trial with man, as a criminal is tried by his judge, as he cannot answer him, or account for, one of a thousand of his sins, how, therefore, can he be justified, *i. e.*, cleared, or acquitted, or saved from condemnation

in his sight? The judicial sense of this passage is very plain.

Take another passage. In Psalm 143:2, we read: "And enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." In this passage, the forensic or judicial sense of the word "justified," is very clear. The Psalmist prays that God will not enter into judgment with him, *i. e.*, call him to account, or sit as a judge on his case, because, being really guilty, and as all men are equally guilty with himself, therefore, neither himself, nor any other man living, can be, in God's sight, justified, *i. e.*, acquitted of the charge of sin and saved from the punishment which it deserves. To be justified, and to be acquitted, are here evidently the same thing.

Those passages in which justification and condemnation are spoken of as opposites of each other, make this interpretation especially manifest. Take for example, Rom. 5:18, "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Here, just as condemnation means "the judicial

act of declaring one guilty, and dooming him to punishment," as Webster defines it, so justification means the very opposite of that, and imports the judicial act of declaring one not guilty, and saving him from punishment.

Equally clear is Rom. 8:33, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth—who is he that condemneth?" Here the whole transaction, as indicated by these words, is judicial. We have before us the judge, the tribunal, the accuser, the charge brought, the person arraigned, the condemnation sought, the acquittal from the charge, the exemption from punishment. The whole is judicial. The condemnation of the accused by the judge does not make him guilty—he was guilty before, and his condemnation judicially fastens his guilt upon him, and sentences him to punishment. So his justification does not make him righteous; the righteousness, on the ground of which he is justified, must be found before, and his justification is his judicial acquittal of the charge brought against him on the ground of a perfect righteousness that is found to be adequate for his acquittal.

It seems to me that these passages make the nature of Justification plain to the commonest capacity. By keeping clear in our minds the distinction between sanctification, which makes us personally holy, and justification, which is our judicial acquittal of the charge of guilt, and the removal of the condemnation which God's law denounces upon the transgressor, we can have no difficulty in comprehending the nature of both. To use the forcible words of another, "Sanctification is the act of God within us, changing our moral nature—Justification is the act of God without us, changing our relative state—*blessings inseparable, indeed, but essentially distinct.*"

It may be instructive, as well as interesting, to all present to hear what is said concerning the nature of Justification, by some of the old and learned divines of our Church, as well as the testimony of our Confessions themselves. The Formula of Concord, Art. 3, says, "The word to justify here signifies to declare or pronounce just or righteous, and absolved from sins, and to account as released from the eternal punishment of sins, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed

to faith by God." The great Chemnitz says, "Paul everywhere describes Justification *as a judicial process*, because the conscience of the sinner, accused by the divine law before the tribunal of God, convicted, and lying under the sentence of eternal condemnation, but fleeing to the throne of grace, is restored, acquitted, delivered from the sentence of condemnation, is received into eternal life, on account of the obedience and intercession of the Son of God, the Mediator, which is apprehended and applied by faith." To this clear and lucid statement of the doctrine, Quenstedt, another of our profound divines, furnishes the explicit testimony: "Justification is the external, judicial, gracious act of the most Holy Trinity, by which it accounts a sinful man, whose sins are forgiven on account of the merits of Christ, apprehended by faith, as just, to the praise of its glorious grace and justice, and to the salvation of the justified." To these statements of the doctrine, we must yet add that of the learned Baier, who says, "Justification has a forensic sense, and denotes that act by which God, the Judge, pronounces righteous the sinner guilty of crime, and deserving punishment, but

who believes in Jesus." The testimony of the Church is uniform with the testimony of the Scriptures. As the Word of God announces the doctrine, so it has been understood and confessed by all the sound divines and faithful members of the Church, from the beginning to the present time.

Bearing in mind the forensic or judicial meaning of justification, we must next inquire into the nature of the righteousness which constitutes

THE GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION.

In order correctly to understand the ground of our justification, we remark—

1. *Justification, or, a judicial acquittal, demands a perfect righteousness as the ground of it.*

The great moral law controls our relation to God and to His moral government of the world. It is the standard of moral duty. Obedience of the law is righteousness; transgression of the law is sin. 1 John 3:4. Righteousness requires a perfect fulfilment of every precept of the law,

and the least violation of any of its precepts is sin, and brings us under its entire condemnation. "He that is guilty of one point is guilty of all," and the denunciation is in these solemn words: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." This is very clear. It is not needed to break every precept of the law in order to be a transgressor of the law. If one precept is broken, the law is broken. An offender in one point is an offender against the whole law. No righteousness is perfect that is not complete in all things. The righteousness on account of which we can be justified before the court of heaven must be perfect. Nothing less than this is righteousness. In a judicial sense, nothing less than this can be righteousness. As it was in the old law, so it is now, and always will be, in God's court, as in human courts, "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, then shall they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." Deut. 25:1. "We are sinners, simply because we have transgressed the law, whether it be only once

or a thousand times; so we can be accounted righteous only when we may be regarded as having perfectly kept the law." The thief or the murderer suffers the penalty of imprisonment or capital punishment for the violation of but one of the immense number of laws on the statute-book. He may have kept all the others; the transgression of one is enough to condemn him. So says human law, and on this point the law of God and the law of man accord perfectly, and the enlightened judgment of all men, in all ages, has pronounced it right and just.

We remark—

2. *We have not in our hearts and lives a personal righteousness that can constitute the ground of our justification.*

The Scriptures, confirmed by every man's experience, make this point so clear that argument upon it is scarcely necessary. The passages, Rom. 3:10, "There is none righteous, no not one," and Rom. 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," are complete proofs of it. Equally explicit is the passage, Titus

3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy hath he saved us." But most conclusive of all are the declarations, Rom. 3:20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin," and Gal. 2:16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Now, the nature of Justification itself, being a judicial acquittal of a person arraigned for crime, makes it very evident that, if we are sinners and have transgressed the law, we can never be justified by our works, for our works are the very things that condemn us. A prisoner, arraigned before the court on a charge of crime, can be acquitted only if his innocence is established; but if guilty, and strict justice is done, he must inevitably be condemned. Adam, before he fell, could have been justified by works, for he was then innocent and had broken no law. Unfallen

angels can be justified by works, for they have never sinned. But sinners, being guilty men, as we all are, can never be justified by works, for "How can a man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer one of a thousand." If we were holy as Adam before he fell, as unfallen angels are, or as Jesus, who was without sin, then we might hope to be justified by works; but *the fact of guilt makes justification by works impossible.*

We remark—

3. *Christ's righteousness is the only ground of our justification.*

The Scriptures uniformly represent that Christ became our substitute and surety, took our place, and acted in our stead, and by His obedience unto death, His doing, and His suffering, He effected for us a vicarious atonement; and that whosoever believes on Him has His righteousness accounted to him as his own, and stands justified before God, for Christ's sake. Christ's obedience is, therefore, instead of our obedience, and His righteousness instead of our righteousness, in the matter of our

justification. The perfect righteousness which Justification requires, and which we so lamentably lack, we find in our Divine Surety, who obeyed the law in our stead, whose righteousness is made over or imputed to us, and in His righteousness we are accepted and regarded as righteous. The law is fulfilled, not by us, but in the person of a representative—"The Lord our righteousness." Jer. 23:6. Faith appropriates that righteousness, so that to the believer alone is the vicarious righteousness of Christ imputed. It is, therefore, called the righteousness of faith, and the entire doctrine is known as the doctrine of Justification by Faith.

Concerning this doctrine, as thus briefly stated, let us now go to the Word of God, and listen to its testimony:

In the third chapter of Romans, St. Paul argues this subject at length, in the most able and conclusive manner. "There is none righteous; no, not one." "Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and

upon all them that believe. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, to declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Can anything be more clearly stated, or more conclusively reasoned? Not any deeds that man doeth, nor any righteousness that man worketh, but the righteousness of God, the Divine Redeemer of man, is the ground on which his justification or acquittal before God taketh place.

Now, this is not the only instance in which this doctrine is taught in the Scriptures. It is the general tenor of the apostle's teaching. Let us hear a few additional statements. In Rom. 10: 3, 4, he says, concerning his Jewish brethren, "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteous-

ness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Hear also Phil. 3:9, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God by faith." In 1 Cor. 1:30, we read: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." In 2 Cor. 5:21, we read: "For He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Jeremiah had prophetically said concerning Christ, Jer. 23:6, "And this is the name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness."

Now, brethren, we can only conceive of two classes of justifying righteousness. Only two kinds of righteousness, as bearing upon our justification, are ever spoken of in the Scriptures, and these are our own righteousness and the righteousness of Christ. These are always placed in direct and positive opposition to each other when

the subject of discussion is justification. See how completely and persistently the antithesis is carried out. "Is one called the 'righteousness of the law,' the other is the 'righteousness of faith.' Is one called by St. Paul 'our own righteousness,' the other he calls the 'righteousness of God.' Is one described as 'by the law,' the other is 'without the law.' Is one reckoned to 'him that worketh,' the other is to 'him that worketh not.' Is the one 'of debt,' the other is 'of grace.' Does one give man 'whereof to glory,' because it is 'of works,' the other 'excludes boasting,' because it is 'of faith.' Does Paul 'count all things but loss that he may win Christ, and be found in Him?' He has no hope of succeeding till he has first laid aside 'his own righteousness' as worthless, and put on in its stead the 'righteousness which is by the faith of Christ.' In his view these two are essentially inconsistent in the office of justification, so that if we trust in the one we cannot have the other; if we 'go about to establish our own righteousness,' it implies that we have not submitted to, but rejected, the 'righteousness of God.'"

What, now, is the process? The sinner stands

before God charged with the transgression of His law. He is guilty. He can present no plea of "not guilty." He has committed the deed with which he is charged ; and not only in one instance, but in thousands, for they are more than the hairs of his head, and cannot be numbered. As he has no innocence to offer, and no righteousness to plead, he is under the curse of the law, and awaits the sentence of condemnation from the lips of the Judge. But lo! a righteousness is found that will save him. Christ his divine substitute and surety has by his vicarious obedience "magnified the law, and made it honorable"—has so fully obeyed the law in his stead, that not one jot or one tittle remains unfulfilled ; and this His righteousness is now declared for the remission of sins—declared, repeats the apostle, that God "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." He, therefore, that lays hold with the trembling hand of faith upon the Saviour's righteousness, has that righteousness reckoned to him, and in it he stands justified before God. With David, Psalm 71 : 16, his faith leads him to say, "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only ;" and the

righteousness of which he makes mention, and on which he rests his salvation, will not disappoint his hopes.

We quote the words of another: "Such is the fulness of that meritorious cause of justification unto all who believe, that they are accounted righteous; in other words, righteousness is accounted or imputed to them—righteousness as perfect as the merits of the Redeemer, because of those merits it consists—so that to believers God no more imputes sin, than if they had never sinned. The numerous passages I have quoted, teach nothing less than that whenever a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, though his sins be as scarlet, and as numerous as the sands on the seashore, the righteousness of Christ, as his substitute and surety, is so perfectly made over to him, that he stands in Him, before God, as having nothing laid to his charge; his sins remembered no more; his justification (not his sanctification, remember,)—his justification as perfect as was that of Adam before he sinned—no more capable of being increased than the righteousness of the Beloved in whom he is accepted. This is the fulness of the

glory of our redemption. *It is finished. It is finished.* ‘He that believeth is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses.’ Therefore does St. Paul triumphantly exclaim, ‘Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?’ Such is the blessed doctrine of Justification by Faith, without which, as the standards of the church truly say, ‘The poor conscience can have no certain hope, nor conceive the riches of the grace of Christ.’”

The doctrine as thus announced in God’s Word, is the doctrine of our Church as laid down in our Confessions, and is also the uniform testimony of our ablest theologians. Says the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: “To be justified here signifies, according to forensic usage, to absolve a guilty man and pronounce him just, but on account of the righteousness of another, viz., of Christ, which righteousness of another is communicated to us by faith.” The Formula of Concord, Art. 3, has the following: “Christ’s obedience, therefore, not only in suffering and dying, but in His being voluntarily put under the law in our stead and

fulfilling it with such obedience, is imputed to us for righteousness, so that for the sake of this perfect obedience, which He rendered unto His heavenly Father for us, in both doing and suffering in His life and death, God forgives us our sins, accounts us as righteous and just, and saves us eternally." The great theologian, Quenstedt, has this luminous passage: "The form of imputation consists in the gracious decision of God, by which the penitent sinner, on account of the most perfect obedience of another, *i. e.*, of Christ, apprehended by faith, according to Gospel mercy, is pronounced righteous before the divine tribunal, just as if this obedience had been rendered by man himself." It will be clearly seen how closely these statements of the doctrine harmonize with the utterances of the Word of God, as presented in this discourse.

The discussion of our subject would be incomplete, if we did not yet consider more at length, Faith as the

MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION.

In the economy of grace, Faith performs a twofold office. It is, in the soul, the root and spring

of all other Christian graces; and, therefore, is the principle of our sanctification. All Christian virtues do spring out of a true and living faith. Good works, as the fruit of a living piety, have their root and source away down in true and saving faith. "Faith without works is dead," says the apostle, and a dead faith cannot save us. Faith is the hand that lays hold on Christ, Heb. 6:18; and it must be a living not a dead hand, for a dead hand cannot lay hold. Faith is the eye, that looks to Jesus for salvation, Isaiah 45:22; John 3:14, 15; and it must be a living, sparkling eye, for a dead eye cannot look. This office of faith, as the spring whence issue the streams of holy and useful deeds, that adorn the Christian character and bless the world, is of very high and essential importance, and must have a very prominent place in the teachings of the Church, and in the practical life of every Christian.

But for the purpose of Justification, faith has another, and different office, which is to be kept very distinct both in our teaching, and in our experience. It is simply the means or instrument of our appropriation of Christ, by which we put on

Christ's righteousness, and lay hold on the promises of salvation in him. Faith is not the ground of our Justification, for this is the righteousness of Christ, nor is there any such merit in the exercise of faith, that we are justified as a reward for the good work or merit of believing. It is simply the instrument, the hand stretched out, the eye looking, by which we accept and appropriate to ourselves, the merits of the Saviour. In the language of the Confessions of our Church, "It remains the office and property of faith alone, that it alone, and nothing else, is the medium or instrument, by and through which the grace of God, and the merit of Christ, in the promises of the Gospel, are apprehended, and received, and accepted, and are applied, and appropriated to us, and that love and all other virtues or works are excluded from this office, and property of such application or appropriation." *Formula Concord, Art. 3, Just. by Faith.* Faith is therefore effectual unto our Justification simply as an act by which we embrace Christ, receive His benefits, appropriate His merits, put on the garment of His spotless righteousness, lay hold upon His promises, cling to His cross, and put our feet firmly upon the rock of our Salvation, which is Christ.

It is of the first importance that we keep distinctly separate in our minds, this twofold nature and office of faith. In reference to our Justification, it is simply the means, or the instrument of our appropriation of Christ, and His benefits, and that only. "To some it may seem, however, that the difference between these divergent views is too slight to be made of any importance. But we apprehend, it is the point of divergency where lies the unseen origin of those very errors which have for their legitimate issue, *when carried out*, nothing less than justification by our own righteousness." —*Bp. McIlvaine.*

"In the point of acceptation," says an old divine, "God hath given to this poor virtue of faith a name above all names. Faith, indeed, as it is a virtue, is poor and mean, and comes short of love. Faith is but *a bare hand*. It lets all things fall that it may fill itself with Christ. Nothing is required but a bare empty hand, which hath nothing to bring with it; though it be ever so weak, yet if it have a hand to receive, it is alike precious faith, that of the poorest believer and the greatest saint."

Again. "Faith is simply the hand that takes of the righteousness of Christ, and appropriates it unto us, while laying our sins on the head of that wonderful sacrifice He was for us. It is a hand without price, without desert, a sinful, as well as an empty hand, meriting to be smitten dead for its own defects, and for the sinfulness of him whose hand it is, while as God's appointed means, *it puts on Christ, and clothes the sinner in His righteousness.*"

The representation of the instrumental office of faith, by terming it the hand that takes, and the eye that looks, is not only common in theological writers, but is so because authorized by the Word of God. There we are directed both to "lay hold on the hope that is set before us," Heb. 6:18, and to "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," John 1:29, and "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," Isaiah 45:22. As this taking and looking is not with the bodily hand and eye, it is, of course, with the hand and eye of faith.

I may fittingly sum up the results of the discussion in the forcible words of an eloquent divine.

“By faith we are in Christ Jesus. A weak faith accomplishes this living union as really, though not with so much sensible consolation to the soul, as a stronger faith. But, says St. Paul, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Now, condemnation is the precise opposite of justification. Where one is not, the other must be. To impute sin is to condemn; not to impute sin is to justify. If it is unreasonable to speak of God’s imputing sin only partially, so that a man shall be accounted as only partly a sinner and partly not a sinner, which is indeed absurd, then it is unreasonable to speak of God’s justifying but partly, or accounting a man in a judicial sense partly condemned and partly acquitted, which would amount to being partly a child of God, and partly a child of the devil—partly under the penalty of the law, and partly under grace. In precisely the same sense and degree, therefore, in which justification could be progressive, must condemnation be also. But condemnation is not progressive in any sense. It is complete as soon as we sin. A thousand more sins will increase our penalty, but cannot increase the certainty of our condemnation. The

amount of penalty depends on the amount of guilt. The perfectness or certainty of condemnation depends only on the *fact* of guilt. Just as a dozen acts of theft will increase the amount of the convict's penalty ; but in a just administration of law, one act of theft will insure condemnation. So also in justification. Christ's righteousness is set in precise opposition to our sin. Justification depends upon our having that righteousness accounted to us instead of our sin. Faith is the instrument or means that obtains that righteousness. As the first act of sin condemns perfectly, so the first act of faith justifies perfectly. Subsequent acts of faith, and stronger degrees thereof, will increase our sense of consolation in Christ, and our confidence of the love of God, and our strength in every walk of Godliness, and will multiply upon our souls for present comfort and spiritual prosperity all the recompense arising from such growth in grace, just as increase of guilt increases shame and penalty ; but all this can no more acquire for us a more perfect justification, than additional guilt would obtain a more entire condemnation. Christ our righteousness is our strong city—our

city of refuge. Once inside the gates, the sinner is safe from the avenger, whether he enter far within or just across the threshold. Christ is the ark. It mattered not, in the days of Noah, whether those who fled from the flood to the ark were possessed of a strong or a trembling faith—whether during the awfulness of the deluge they all felt assured of protection, or were some of them fearful. Strong or weak in faith, they had sufficient faith to induce them to flee for refuge to the hope set before them. When the flood came, they were found therein. It was enough. All from the very instant of their entrance were alike perfectly secure under the shadow of the Almighty. Continuing in the ark, their safety admitted neither of increase nor diminution. So in Christ. He that wins Christ, and is found in Him, is complete in Him. He may have entered the last hour, or the last century. He may have come doubtful or assured; with a trembling faith or with an assured one. His hand may have reached the refuge with a firm or a feeble grasp. He may have escaped out of the deepest mire of ungodliness, or from having been always not far from the kingdom;

but it altereth not, *he is in the ark*. God hath shut him in. Who shall lay anything to his charge? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us.”—*Bp. McIlvaine*.

Indulge me yet in three remarks.

1. *We have in this subject the great line of distinction between truth and error.*

The doctrine of Justification by Faith is particularly the dividing line between Romanism and Protestantism. The Reformation of the sixteenth century turned principally on this point. “Luther,” says Scott, in his “Luther, and the Lutheran Reformation,” “was appointed in the counsels of Providence, by no means exclusively of the other reformers, but in a manner more extraordinary and much superior, to teach mankind, after upwards of a thousand years’ obscurity, this great evangelical tenet, compared with which how little appear all other objects of controversy! He proved by numberless arguments from the Scriptures, and particularly by the marked opposition between

law and faith, law and grace, that in justification before God all sorts of human works are excluded, moral as well as ceremonial. He restored to the Christian world the true *forensic* or judicial sense of the word *justification*, and rescued that term from the erroneous sense in which, for many ages, it had been misunderstood, as though it meant *infused* habits of virtue, whence it had been usual to confound justification with sanctification. By this doctrine, rightly stated with all its adjuncts and dependencies, a new light breaks in on the mind, and Christianity appears singularly distinct not only from Romanism, but also from all other religions. Neither the superstitions of the Papist, nor the sensibility of the humane, nor the splendid alms of the ostentatious, nor the most powerful efforts of unassisted nature, avail in the smallest degree to the purchase of pardon and peace. The glory of this purchase belongs to Christ alone; and he who in real humility approves of, acquiesces in, and rests on Him, is the true Christian."

These observations of the historian are discriminating and just.

2. *We have in this subject the source of greatest consolation to Christian minds.*

How full of hope and comfort to the heart of the humble believer is the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ! "Being justified by faith we have peace with God;" and, of course, peace within our own hearts. When we look at ourselves, we see naught but weakness, imperfections, and sins; and we justly tremble with apprehension for the future; and if we had nothing but our own righteousness to depend on, we might well utterly despair. But when we look away from ourselves, and contemplate the pure and perfect righteousness of Christ, our divine surety, and consider that His spotless righteousness, being His obedience of the law in our stead, is imputed to us as our own, and that we may stand in it righteous before God, and justified of all our sins, the soul is filled with unutterable peace and joy. We lie at the foot of the cross, and look up to Jesus crucified for us, as all our salvation, and the view gives peace unspeakable. The whole doctrine is so extraordinary and wonderful, that the Christian is sometimes disposed to think that it is

too good to be true. But no, fellow Christians, it is as true as it is good.

3. *We have in this subject the answer to be given to anxious souls who inquire the way of salvation.*

To the question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" the Apostle Paul gave the answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved;" and, brethren, we have no other answer for that question now. We have the same needs, the same Saviour, the plan of salvation is the same, and the way by which we can procure its benefits is still the same. On account of its wonderful simplicity, it is regarded now, as formerly, by the "Jew a stumbling-block," and by the "Greek foolishness;" but it is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." We must, therefore, now as ever, direct the inquirer for the way to heaven to the Lord Jesus Christ, as his "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." But, he answers, "I am such a great sinner." We reply, "There is no doubt of it." "I have deserved to be cast away forever." "'Tis certainly true." "I can do nothing to atone

for my numerous and aggravated transgressions.” “’Tis plain that you cannot.” “What, then, shall I do?” “Do! simply, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in the Atonement He has made for you. Believe His word and promise when he tells you that He became your substitute, obeyed the law, and endured its penalty in your stead; and that as your substitute His obedience is your obedience, His righteousness your righteousness, His sufferings instead of your suffering, and that for His sake, God will treat you as having perfectly kept the law; and, therefore you will not only be released from the punishment due to transgression, but be entitled to the full rewards of obedience. Do you believe this? If you truly, and with the whole heart, believe it, there is no more difficulty in your case. Your fears will give place to hope, joy will succeed to sorrow, and your soul will be at peace with God, and with itself.”

Indulge me in one remark more. Am I addressing any who are altogether indifferent as regards their justification, and are impenitent, unbelieving, careless sinners? Let me affectionately remind you that you are sinning against the highest pos-

sible exhibition of love and mercy. You are rejecting the way of salvation which the Divine mind has devised, and are exalting your reason above Infinite Wisdom. In resting on your own merits, and rejecting Christ's justifying righteousness, you are casting from you God's method of mercy, and are "hewing out for yourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water." Will you blindly go down to despair, when so much has been done, and all is ready, to raise you to heaven?

Cling to the Crucified !

His death is life to thee,

Life for eternity.

His pains thy pardon seal ;

His stripes thy bruises heal ;

His cross proclaims thy peace,

Bids every sorrow cease.

His blood is all to thee,

It purges thee from sin,

It sets thy spirit free,

It keeps thy conscience clean.

Cling to the Crucified !

Cling to the Crucified !

His is a heart of love,

Full as the hearts above ;
Its depth of sympathy
Are all awake for thee ;
His countenance is light,
Even to the darkest night.
That love shall never change,
That light shall ne'er grow dim ;
Charge thou thy faithless heart
To find its all in Him.

Cling to the Crucified !

Cling to the Crucified !

His righteousness is thine,
His works thy plea divine ;
Thy sins on Him were laid ;
His soul an offering made ;
Justice is satisfied ;
The claims of law supplied ;
God now will pardon give,
And man be justified ;
He that believes shall live,
Since Christ for him has died.

Cling to the Crucified !



THE HOLY COMMUNION.*

“Take, eat; this is my body.”—MATTH. 26: 26.

“The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”—1 COR. 10: 16.

WE propose, as a Synod, and as a congregation, to partake this morning of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. It is a most blessed sacrament of the Christian Church. We must necessarily, as Christians, attach much importance to it. Christ, our Lord, did so, and we, as His faithful disciples, must very highly prize what he solemnly instituted. In the Old Testament Church there were two Sacraments, and there are two in the New Testament Church. Circumcision gave way to Baptism, and the Passover to the Lord’s Supper. Circumcision was received once in a lifetime,

* Preached before the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, at Norristown, Pa., May 23, 1875.

but the Passover often; so Baptism is received only once, but the Lord's Supper often. Circumcision was administered to children, and the Passover to adults; so Baptism is administered to children, and the Lord's Supper to adults. Circumcision was initiatory and brought the subject into the Church, and the Passover was partaken by the person when in the Church as a regular member thereof; so Baptism brings us into Christ, and translates us from the kingdom of nature into the kingdom of grace, and the Lord's Supper is a Sacrament for those who are already in the Church, and full members thereof. Circumcision denoted the subject's regeneration, or entrance upon a new life of true faith and piety, and the Passover was the sustentation of that life and a reminder of blessings bestowed by the Paschal Lamb; so Baptism is the washing of regeneration, and effects the vital union with Christ's life, and the Lord's Supper is the nourishing of that spiritual life, and a most blessed remembrancer of the benefits bestowed upon us by the sacrifice of Christ, our true Paschal Lamb, on the cross. Circumcision preceded, and the Passover followed

after, and was administered to none who were uncircumcised; so Baptism must be received first, and the Lord's Supper comes after, and is only administered to persons who have been previously baptized. The analogy is complete, and very instructive, between the two Old Testament and the two New Testament Sacraments.

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper was very early involved in the great and eventful discussions that the Reformation gave rise to. A Sacrament so holy, and occupying so prominent a position in the Christian Church, and that had been so sadly corrupted by the errors against which the entire force of the Reformation was directed, would necessarily early engage a large share of attention. It did so. Luther, at a very early period in the great movement which he inaugurated, perceived the error which the Church of Rome held concerning this Sacrament, both as to its doctrine, and as to its practical administration. It consists of two earthly elements, bread and wine. The one only was administered to the laity, the other was withheld, and was partaken by the priest alone. This, of course, was contrary

to its original institution, by our Lord, who gave it in both kinds. Luther therefore restored it to its original institution, and both administered it himself, and required it to be administered by others, in both kinds. He restored the cup to the people, and thus gave, not a part of the holy Sacrament only, but the whole Sacrament, to all who participated.

But the change in the external administration, was not the only benefit which accrued from the Reformation. Its reformatory work descended deeper, and corrected a more vital error, and one that affected the doctrine and life of the Sacrament.

It is well known that the Church of Rome held, and still holds, the doctrine known as Transubstantiation. By this is meant, that after the external elements of bread and wine, laid on the altar, are consecrated by the priest, and by that act of consecration, a total change is effected in those elements, so that nothing of their original nature and substance remains, save their outward semblance only. The word Transubstantiation means change of substance, a change of one sub-

stance into another substance. The idea is that the entire substance of the bread and wine is changed, and instead of it, another, and a totally different, substance is produced. What was, previous to the act of consecration, simply bread and wine, are such no longer, but are changed—transubstantiated—into the real flesh and blood, together with the soul and divinity of Christ. It follows, therefore, that as the communicant masticates, swallows, and digests something, and that something is not bread and wine, but the actual flesh and blood, together with the soul and divinity of Christ, these are masticated, swallowed, and digested by the communicant.

This doctrine of Transubstantiation was rejected by Luther at a very early period. His faithful adherence to the Word of God, as his only Rule of Faith, and directory of Christian doctrine, would not permit him to receive this as an article of faith. The Bible, indeed, speaks of the Body and Blood as a part of the Sacrament, and he honestly, and in full faith, received its statement. But it also speaks of bread and wine, as a part of the Sacrament, both after, as well as before, the

consecration ; and he must also receive this statement. If he believed, therefore, that the Lord's Supper consisted of the Body and Blood of Christ, he must also believe that it consisted of bread and wine. The one is stated as plainly, and with as much positive directness as the other. He would explain neither away, but accept them both on the same divine authority. He could not believe that it was bread without the Body, and he could not believe that it was the Body without the bread. Both were declared, by the same divine lips, to be present, and to constitute the Holy Sacrament, and he must believe both. The Word of God was clear, and decisive, and left him no alternative. As Transubstantiation set aside the bread, took it away from the Sacrament, changed and abolished its nature, and transubstantiated it into the Body, thus destroying one integral part of the Sacrament, and offering only half a Sacrament to the people, Luther did not hesitate to reject entirely the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

The same earnest adhesion to the statements of the Word of God, would not permit him to reject the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ

from the Lord's Supper. Some, in his time, swinging off from the gross doctrine of Transubstantiation, which made the Sacrament all Body, swung over to the opposite extreme, and made the Sacrament all bread. In their view, it was nothing but bread eaten, and wine drank, in a sort of commemorative representation of Christ's death on the cross. But Christ, when instituting it, had positively said, "This is my body." He took bread, blessed it, still calling it bread, but at the same time pronounced it His Body. Here was a most solemn transaction, done in the most solemn manner, uttered with the most solemn words, and performed at a most solemn time. He must be supposed to choose His words with great care, and with direct reference to their plain import, because He was instituting an ordinance that was to be observed in all coming time, as the chief Sacrament of His Church. His words, therefore, must be well weighed, and must be accepted in their true and obvious meaning.

It was, therefore, plain to Luther's mind, that the Lord's Supper consisted of two kinds of elements, an earthly and a heavenly, both of which

were necessary to constitute the Sacrament. The earthly was bread and wine, the heavenly was the Body and Blood of Christ. The earthly was not a Sacrament without the heavenly, neither was the heavenly a Sacrament without the earthly. The bread and wine alone, did not constitute a Sacrament, neither did the Body and Blood of Christ alone, constitute a Sacrament. Therefore, neither must be changed. The bread must not be changed into the Body, neither must the Body be symbolized merely by the bread. Both must be there in their true and real nature, or there is no Sacrament.

Conclusive as are the words of our Lord at the institution of the Holy Sacrament, they receive confirmation from the clear and positive statements of the Apostle Paul.

In 1 Cor. 10:16, St. Paul asks, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ." This passage is written in the form of questions, and in such a way that there can be only one, and that an affirmative, answer given to

them. To the question, "Is not the cup of blessing the communion of the blood of Christ?" the answer necessarily must be, yes. And to the question, "Is not the bread which we break, the communion of the body of Christ?" the only answer that can be given, and that he intended should be given, is, yes. The one is the communion of the Blood, and the other is the communion of the Body, of Christ.

Now, what is meant by the word "Communion," as it twice occurs in this verse? We can only rightly understand the meaning of the verse, and the nature of the Lord's Supper, by carefully considering the meaning of this word. As the cup, or the wine that it contains, is the "Communion" of the Blood, and the bread is the "Communion" of the Body, of Christ, the question is of essential importance, What is that "Communion?" The Greek word, here translated "communion," is the word *κοινωνία*, and the dictionaries define its meaning by the words "community, sharing, participation, partaking, connection, communication, distribution, alliance," and others of the like general import. The idea plainly is, as stated by the

learned Bengel in his *Gnomon* on this passage, "He who drinks of this cup, is a partaker of the blood of Christ," and he who eats of this bread is a partaker of the body of Christ. It is the channel, or vehicle, or medium of conveyance, by which as the earthly or visible element, the heavenly or invisible element is imparted to the communicant, and received by him. It means, he who partakes of the cup, partakes of the Blood; he who partakes of the bread, partakes of the Body. This is the meaning of the word *Koinonia*, here translated "Communion." The verse might be translated, "When we use the cup of blessing which we bless, do we not also partake of the Blood of Christ? When we use the bread which we break, do we not also partake of the Body of Christ?" This idea of participation, partaking, communication, must be well borne in mind, if we would rightly comprehend the deep and precious meaning of the passage.

But this is not all. In 1 Cor. 11:27, the Apostle Paul says, "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

Of course, disrespect to the bread and the wine, could not involve disrespect to the Body and Blood of the Lord, unless in some way, the Body and Blood of the Lord were connected with the bread and the wine. As it is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper about which he speaks, this connection of the bread and wine with the Body and Blood, is the same as that which, in the previous chapter, he had called "the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ." The disorderly Corinthians were led to treat the Lord's Supper with disrespect, and to eat and drink the bread and wine in gluttonous and drunken excess, because they failed to consider that there was more than bread and wine in the Sacrament, and that another and a divine element was also present, viz., the Body and Blood of Christ. The Apostle, therefore, with much earnestness, pointed out their guilt, which consisted not simply in treating bread and wine with disrespect, but in treating with contempt the higher, even the divine element of which it consisted. They became guilty of shameful abuse of the Body and Blood of the Lord. The Body and Blood of the Lord must, therefore, be

there. These must then necessarily be a part of the Sacrament, and give it its value, and constitute its divine character. Disrespect to bread and wine could not be the crime here charged upon the Corinthians, if the Body and Blood of Christ were not present, and did not form a part of the Sacrament. How could they be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, by any unworthy eating and drinking of bread and wine simply? Whilst this verse then, clearly teaches the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Communion, it also teaches that there is no Transubstantiation, for the bread is still called bread, and what the Apostle calls it, that it undoubtedly is. The two elements, constituting one Sacrament, are both distinctly named. Both are there. The one is not destroyed by being changed into the other. The Body of Christ is a part of the Lord's Supper, but the bread is also. There is no Transubstantiation.

But this is still not all. In 1 Cor. 11 : 29, the Apostle says, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body." How

could any man be justly censured for not discerning the Lord's Body, if there was no Body of the Lord there to be discerned? The Greek word translated "discerning" means to discriminate, to distinguish. They did not distinguish between the common eating and drinking of mere bread and wine, and the solemn partaking of a holy Sacrament of which the Body of the Lord constituted a part. Their sin consisted in failing to discern or distinguish the Lord's Body. But if there was no Body of the Lord there, there was no Body to be discerned, and they could not be guilty of not discerning what did not exist. The whole verse would be meaningless, and the charge of the apostle of sin and guilt against the Corinthians, would have been absurd, if the Sacrament consisted only of bread and wine, and the Body and Blood of Christ formed no part of it. It was the fact that the Body and Blood of Christ were present, and constituted the chief thing in the Sacrament, that rendered them guilty who partook unworthily, because neglecting to discern this higher element in it. The excesses in which they indulged, proceeded from their not discern-

ing the Lord's Body in it, and in this consisted their guilt, and on account of it they ate and drank damnation to themselves. Not only bread, therefore, but the Lord's Body also, are present in the Lord's Supper. All this is very plain to those who candidly and carefully read these passages.

From these plain passages of our Lord, and His apostle, Luther could do no otherwise than hold, that, whilst the earthly or visible element in the Lord's Supper was bread and wine, which underwent no change during any period either before or after the consecration thereof, there was at the same time, another element in the Holy Sacrament, which was no other than the glorified Body and Blood of the Lord. The Word of God was too direct and positive in its statements, for him to adopt any other view, without an utter rejection of that Word. Such was his reverence for God's Word, that he followed wherever it led, and a "Thus saith the Lord," was with him, the end of all controversy.

This doctrine, so Biblical and clear, thus held and promulgated by the great Reformer, was at first assented to and held by all who were associ-

ated with him in the work of Reformation. But after the lapse of a few years, other views began to be entertained, and preached by Carlstadt, Zwinglius, Œcolampadius, and others, and thus the unhappy differences arose concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, that have, until this day, afflicted the Protestant Church. These differences are much to be regretted. Whilst the Church of Rome is united on the doctrine of Transubstantiation, the Protestant Church fritters away its strength, by a large part of it very unwisely taking an extreme position in opposition to that of Rome, and which must be maintained, not by Scriptural declarations, but by arguments drawn professedly from reason and philosophy. It is much to be regretted that Luther's moderate views, and conservative position, sustained as they are by the plain and direct declarations of God's Word, have not been universally adhered to by Protestants. Many of the views that have been uttered and printed on this doctrine, are very crude and undigested, and indicate much more zeal without knowledge than sound and thorough acquaintance with Biblical theology. The doc-

trine of Luther has been assailed, not with passages from God's Word, for these are confessedly plainly and positively in his favor, but with reasons and objections drawn from the inability of the human mind to comprehend the mystery, or to understand how the Word of God can be true in its declarations on this subject. It is, too largely, the old spirit of rationalism that has for many centuries troubled the Church, not only on this, but on other fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. It may serve a useful purpose, if we consider some of these objections and difficulties. The doctrine is strongly intrenched in the Word of God, and mere philosophy cannot overthrow God's Word. Even if the specious objections that human reason may allege against it, could not be fully explained, still God's Word must stand firm over against any difficulties which man's limited capacity to comprehend the infinite, may interpose. A doctrine of God's Word is not necessarily false, because it is beyond the reach of our feeble reason. Man's ignorance cannot overthrow God's infinite intelligence. If God says so, it is true, whether we can explain it or not.

1. It has been charged *that the doctrine of Luther, and of the Lutheran Church, differs little, if in anything, from Transubstantiation.*

But this charge is so obviously untrue, that little effort would seem to be necessary to refute it. Transubstantiation, or a change of the substance of the bread and wine into the actual flesh and blood of Christ, so that no bread and wine remain, but what seem to be bread and wine, are really something else—this notion was rejected by none more positively than it was by Luther, and by no Church more peremptorily than by the Lutheran Church. The Form of Concord uses the following strong language: “We, therefore, reject and condemn with our hearts and lips, as false, and dangerous, and deceptive, the Transubstantiation of the papists, that the bread and wine are changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ.” The Lutheran Church goes out with this plain and distinct principle that the bread and wine undergo no change of substance whatever. At no time or stage in the consecration, or in the participation of the Sacrament is there any change in the substance of the bread and the wine. They

are bread and wine when placed on the table, they are bread and wine when put to the lips of the communicant; they feel, and taste, and smell, and look like bread and wine, and they are so; no change of substance, whatever, of any kind or degree, is effected by their presence on the Communion table. Let this be distinctly borne in mind. If there is no change in the substance of the bread and the wine, then, of course, there can be no Transubstantiation, for this necessarily supposes such a change. Indeed, it is in such a change that Transubstantiation consists. If no change takes place in the substance of the bread and the wine, there can be no gross and carnal eating and drinking of Christ's Body and Blood at all. If we grant that there is no change in the substance of the bread and the wine, all the gross and repulsive ideas, which Transubstantiation awakens, are at once wholly excluded. The presence of Christ must then be of a Sacramental sort, glorified, spiritual, heavenly, not earthy and gross.

It would seem that a small amount only of candid reflection, is needed to prevent the making of such a charge as this. Christ's body is His glori-

fied, resurrection body. The saints, when they rise from the dead will be "like unto Christ's own glorious body." Our resurrection bodies are spoken of as being "spiritual bodies." So nearly will our glorified bodies resemble pure spirit, that "spiritual bodies," is the proper term to designate their nature. In this respect they will resemble Christ's body. His body is, therefore, a "spiritual body." There can, then, of necessity, be no gross, carnal eating, as a man eats the flesh, and drinks the blood of an animal slain. It is an eating and drinking of a different kind. It is after a heavenly, divine, Sacramental sort. It is a bodily partaking, but the body is Christ's glorified, spiritual body, the nature of whose existence, and the mode of whose communication to the partaker of the Sacrament are necessarily incomprehensible to us. It is a real presence, for if not real, it is not a presence of Christ's Body and Blood at all. But it is the real presence of the glorified human nature of Christ, that is so nearly pure spirit as to be properly called a "spiritual body."

That this is the doctrine of the Lutheran Church is evident from the following quotation from the

“Formula of Concord,” one of our Symbolical Books. After quoting an extended extract from Luther’s works, the Formula proceeds to say: “From these words of Dr. Luther, it is manifest in what sense the word *spiritual* is used in our churches, concerning this matter. For, with the Sacramentarians, this word *spiritual* signifies nothing more than that spiritual communion, when by faith the truly believing are incorporated in spirit in Christ, the Lord, and become true spiritual members of His body. But when this word *spiritual* is used by Dr. Luther and by ourselves in relation to this matter, we understand by it the spiritual, supernatural, heavenly mode, according to which Christ, being present in the Holy Supper, works not only consolation and life in the believing, but also judgment in the unbelieving. And by this word *spiritual* we reject those Capernaitic thoughts concerning the gross, carnal presence, with which our churches are charged by the Sacramentarians, notwithstanding our public and frequent protestations. In this sense we wish the word *spiritual* to be understood, when we assert that, in the Holy Supper, the body and blood of Christ are spiritually

received, eaten, and drunk; for although this participation takes place orally, yet the mode is spiritual.”

When these two things are duly taken into consideration, viz., that there is no change supposed to be effected in the substance of the bread and the wine, but that they remain, during the whole communion, simply bread and wine, and that, further, the presence of Christ is the presence of his glorified, spiritual body, that is inseparably united to the divine nature in one person,—when, we say, these two points are taken into consideration, who can reasonably object to the doctrine as thus held, and set forth, or charge upon it the gross error of Transubstantiation?

Bear with me, whilst, even at the risk of some repetition, I dwell a little longer on this objection to the doctrine of the Lutheran Church on the Lord's Supper.

Let it, then, be borne in mind, very distinctly, by friends and opponents of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church, that we hold:

First, the Lord's Supper is composed of two visible or earthly elements, viz., bread and wine,

both of which must be used in the administration of the Sacrament.

Secondly, neither the bread nor the wine undergo any change at any time, before or during the administration of the Sacrament. They are both so termed in the passages describing it, and not the remotest intimation is given of any change. The bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine. Bread and wine are placed on the altar, and after consecration they are what they were before, substantially bread and wine. The bread is not changed into the Body, nor the wine into the Blood. They remain bread and wine, both in their essence and in their accidents. They undergo no change in their nature, whatever. The communicant eats and drinks bread and wine; they look, and feel, and smell, and taste like bread and wine, and they are bread and wine. They were bread and wine when the proper officer laid them on the altar; they are still bread and wine when the prayer of consecration is said over them; they are bread and wine when the communicant receives them into his lips; and from first to last in the Lord's Supper they are bread and wine.

But thirdly, The word of God informs us that there is another element present and partaken of, a heavenly and invisible element, that is also received with the reception of the visible or earthly element, and this invisible or heavenly element is called the Body and Blood of Christ. This is very distinctly stated. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" There are two factors, or two kinds of elements, therefore, in the composition of the Lord's Supper. The one is visible, tangible, external, terrestrial, viz., the bread and wine. The other is invisible, intangible, internal, celestial, viz., the Body and Blood of Christ. The one is gross, material, and that can be touched and handled, and that is cognizant by our bodily senses, viz., the bread and wine. The other is refined, spiritual, that cannot be touched or handled, and that is not perceived by our bodily organs or senses, viz., the Body and Blood of Christ. When I take the earthly, God also with it, gives me the heavenly.

These two kinds of elements are always present,

and make the one Sacrament. They, however, remain distinct, as to their different natures, and are never changed the one into the other. The bread is never changed into the Body, nor the Body changed into the bread. How they are related to each other, is, of course, mysterious to us, but the mysteriousness of it does not destroy the fact, nor make it any the less certain. The same mystery exists in all the other means of grace, as well as in other undisputed facts of Christianity. See how this principle runs through them all.

The *Word of God* is composed, as we have it, of two parts, the material and the spiritual. The material is the Book, visible, earthly, external, which we can see with the eye, and touch with the hand. But the spiritual, is the truth and grace which it conveys, invisible, heavenly, internal, which we can neither see with the eye nor touch with the hand. The material is the vehicle of the spiritual, for through it the spiritual is conveyed; but the material is never changed into the spiritual, nor the spiritual into the material.

The Sacrament of *Baptism* has two kinds of elements, an earthly and a heavenly. The one is

water, and the other is the Holy Ghost, for Christian Baptism is a Baptism both of water and of the Holy Ghost. The water is visible, earthly, external, tangible, as we can see it, and feel it, and handle it. But the Holy Ghost is invisible, heavenly, internal, intangible, and that we cannot see, and feel, and handle with our bodily organs and senses, as we do the water. So here, too, there is no change of the one element into the other element. The water is not changed into the Holy Ghost, nor the Holy Ghost into water, but through the administration of the water in Baptism, the Holy Ghost is given. Yet, although there are two elements in Baptism, and there is no Transubstantiation, or passing of one substance into the other, but both water and the Holy Ghost retain their distinct natures, there are however not two baptisms, but only one Holy Sacrament of Christian Baptism. As in Baptism, so in the Lord's Supper. The two kinds of elements, the earthly and the heavenly, although not changed, the one into the other, but retaining their distinct natures, yet constitute but one Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

We may here also cite, with such limitations as are necessary to guard against wrong sentiments, several illustrations of a somewhat different kind. *Christ, in His Person, as composed of two distinct natures*, affords such illustration. Not that the union of the two natures, and the union of the two elements, are the same, for the Lutheran Church does not hold that the union of the Body and the bread, is like that of the divine and human natures in Christ, which are "inseparably joined together in unity of person, being not two Christs, but one Christ." But guarding carefully against pushing the comparison too far, we note that when on earth, Christ's divinity manifested itself, and acted through His humanity, as the visible vehicle or medium of communication with men, so in the Lord's Supper, there is one Holy Sacrament, composed of two different elements, the one earthly, the other heavenly, and in the mode of its operation the heavenly communicates itself by and through the earthly. But as in His own mysterious person, there is no fusing of the natures, no changing of the one into the other, no transmuting of the humanity into the divinity, and yet of the

two natures, there is constituted one undivided Christ; so in the Holy Communion, whilst there is no changing of the earthly into the heavenly, no Transubstantiation of the bread into the Body, yet of the two kinds of elements, there is constituted one Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

So also, not precisely like it, for we do not hold that the Body dwells locally in the bread, as the soul lives in the human body, or is physically connected with it, but still near enough for illustration, as to the mode of operation, we remark, that every *man* is composed of two component parts, or distinct natures, the body and the soul. The body is not changed into the soul, nor is the soul changed into the body. The one is visible, the other is invisible. The one is material, the other is spiritual. The invisible soul, or spiritual nature, manifests itself through the visible body, or material nature, as it is the soul that speaks through the tongue, that acts by the hands and feet, and that hears and sees through the ears and eyes. Where the one is, there is also the other, for in life they are never separated.

When, therefore, we say that the *bread and wine*

are the visible, earthly, external, and material parts of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, whereas the *Body and Blood of Christ*, are the invisible, heavenly, internal, supernatural parts of the same Sacrament, that the earthly is the medium through which the heavenly is conveyed, that they are always present, so that when we have the one, we have also the other, and that the invisible and heavenly element is the higher and nobler element,—when we say this, we are only saying what we see everywhere taught in the Gospel, what is in plain accordance with the analogy that exists in all the ordinances and means of grace, and that we see illustrated in our own complex natures, and in many other things existing around us. When, consequently, our Church Catechism, the smaller Catechism of Luther says, that “the Lord's Supper is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given unto Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ himself,” it only says, in clear and beautiful words, what is most plainly taught in the numerous passages of the New Testament, referring to the Lord's Supper.

2. Another common objection to the doctrine of Luther, and a favorite mode of rendering it absurd to the minds of unthinking persons, is to ask: *How could the Body and Blood of Christ be partaken of in the Lord's Supper, by the disciples, when He was sitting present with them at the table?* When He said, "Take, eat, this is my Body," did they really eat His Body that was then sitting at the table with them?

Now, if we believed in the Romish tenet of Transubstantiation, and therefore, that there was really no bread nor wine on the table, after Christ had consecrated them, but the bread and wine that had been there, were actually changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, so that what the disciples masticated and swallowed, and what they saw, and felt, and handled, and tasted, was not bread and wine, but the real substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, then such a question as this would probably give us some trouble to answer. The disciples masticated something with their teeth, what they masticated they swallowed, and what they swallowed the stomach digested. But if it was not bread and wine, which Transub-

stantiation denies that it was, it must have been the substance into which Transubstantiation affirms they were changed. As that, according to the tenet of Transubstantiation, was the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, therefore, the disciples masticated, swallowed, and digested the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, whilst he was sitting at the table with them. But as the Lutheran Church does not believe in the gross, Capernaitish eating and drinking which Transubstantiation proposes, such a question as this, urged as an objection to our doctrine, does not at all affect us.

On the subject of the various modes of Christ's presence which this question involves, Luther himself has some very admirable remarks in his *Treatise on the Sacraments*. They show how profound were his sentiments, and how farseeing his views. He was, indeed, the most extraordinary uninspired man that ever lived. Let us hear his words:

“The body of Christ,” says he, “has three different ways, or a triple mode, of being in any place.

“First, *the comprehensible and corporeal mode*, as when he went about corporeally on earth, where he occupied, and took up space according to His magnitude. This mode, He is still able to use, when He pleases, as He did after His resurrection, and as He will at the last day.” But this is not the mode of His presence at the Lord’s Supper.

“Secondly, *the incomprehensible, spiritual mode*, in which He is not circumscribed in space, but penetrates through all creatures, where He pleases, as my vision (to use this rude comparison), passes through air, light, and water, and yet neither takes up, nor makes room; as sound passes through air, or water, or planks, or walls, and yet does not take up, nor make, room; again, as light and heat pass through air, water, glass, crystals, and the like, and yet neither make nor require room, and many similar examples could be named. This method He employed when He arose from the sealed sepulchre, and when He passed through the closed doors.

“Thirdly, *the divine and heavenly mode*, in which He is one person with God, and according to which, all creatures must, undoubtedly, be far

more easily penetrated, and be nearer to Him, than they are according to the second mode. For, if according to the second mode, He can be in and with creatures, in such a way, that they neither feel, nor touch, nor measure, nor comprehend Him, how much more wonderfully is He in all creatures according to this exalted third mode, so that they neither measure nor comprehend Him, but much rather that He has them present before Him, measures and comprehends them! For this mode of the presence of Christ, derived from the personal union with God, you must place far, very far beyond creatures, as far as God is above them; again as deep and as near in all creatures as God is in them, for he is an inseparable person with God, where God is there He must also be, or our faith is false. But who can tell, or imagine the manner in which this takes place? We well know that it is so, namely, that He is in God, that He is apart from all creatures, and that He is one person with God, but how it comes to pass, we know not. It is above nature and reason, yea above all the angels in heaven; it is known and obvious to God alone. Since, then, it is unknown

to us, and is nevertheless true, we should not deny His word unless we are able to prove with certainty, that the Body of Christ can by no means be where God is, and that this mode of presence is false. It is incumbent upon the objectors to our doctrine, to prove this, but they will not attempt it."

These wonderful words of the great Luther, afford a complete answer to the question which is asked with so much confidence, as an unanswerable objection to the true doctrine of Christ's presence in the Holy Communion. Christ had more than the one mode of presence as He sat in the view of His disciples. He was visible there, was he not at the same time invisible elsewhere? If His divine and human natures were inseparable, and constituted one person, as the Scriptures clearly teach, and all true evangelical Christians believe, was He not in His human nature, wherever He was in His divine nature? Whilst, therefore, He sat visibly in the upper room in Jerusalem, was he not at the same time present in Galilee, in the house of Mary and Martha in Bethany, in the place called Calvary where He

was to be offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and indeed in all other places? Who can circumscribe the movements or define the presence of such a Being as the Son of God, and Son of Mary, in His wonderful complex nature? What was there to hinder him communicating Himself after a Sacramental, heavenly, incomprehensible sort, to His disciples as He sat with them at the table and as they received from His hands the earthly elements of that mysterious Sacrament which was to be observed in all future time, to the end of the world, as the "Communion of His Body, and the Communion of His Blood?" It must be plain to every true Christian believing reader of the Holy Scriptures, that our ideas of Christ's presence, and movements, and powers, must be different from those which we form of any other being of whom we have any knowledge. Here is the mistake that men make, and the source of a large amount of perplexity and error concerning the things of Christ. They think of Christ, as a being like themselves and of His presence and acts as those of men constituted like themselves, and with such narrow and

low views, they can never rise to the height and breadth of the wonderful things that are taught concerning Him in the Scriptures. Their measurement signally fails them, when they would measure such a being as Christ, with the measuring rod that they use to measure their own insignificant altitude.

3. *It is further alleged as an objection to this doctrine, that it is incomprehensible.*

We admit it. We do not know how Christ communicates himself to the partaker of the Holy Communion. We know that it is not visible, tangible, carnal, sensual. It is invisible, intangible, supernatural, celestial, after the manner of His glorified Body. This is all we know. But what then? Does its mysteriousness militate against its reality? Is it not real and true because I do not understand it? I do not so regard it. For the matter of that, it does not seem more mysterious to me than any other of the means of grace, or facts of the Gospel. How God's grace is communicated to me through the letters, and words, and ink, and paper, that constitute the written

Word of God, is a mystery to me. How the Holy Ghost, through the medium of water in Baptism, conveys to the soul of the person baptized, His divine blessing and grace, is a mystery to me. How Christ's divinity is united to his humanity, so that through the flesh and blood of His mortal body, that suffered and died on the cross, God spake, and wrought miracles, and moved among men, is a mystery to me. How the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross effected an atonement for my sin, and washes it away, and saves my soul, is a mystery to me. How Christ is at all times present wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, and present, too, in His twofold, divine and human nature, for as such only is He the Mediator between God and man, and therefore, present with his people, is a mystery to me. How therefore "the cup of blessing which we bless" is "the communion of the Blood of Christ," and "the bread which we break is the communion of the Body of Christ," is, of course, a mystery to me. But cannot I take His word for it? May I not believe what He says? When Christ says, "This is my Body," shall I not believe His words?

When the Holy Apostle says, in words so plain that I cannot misunderstand them, that the cup is the communion of His Blood, and the bread is the communion of His Body, shall I not believe that he speaks the truth? Christ knows, and the apostle knows, if I do not know. Shall I, who am so much lower in the scale of intelligence, refuse to let Christ or His apostle instruct me? Shall I sit in judgment on Christ's veracity? Shall I deny the apostle's truthfulness? I do not refuse to believe other mysteries, why should I refuse to believe this? The other mysteries of my holy faith are not, in any degree, less mysterious to me, or more easy for me to understand, than this, and yet I believe them without any hesitation. I admit them to be facts and realities on the testimony of God's Word, even though the mode of them is a mystery to me. Why should I feel, and believe, and act, differently concerning the mystery of Christ's presence in the Holy Communion? Cannot Christ give me His Body and Blood, as He says He does? He says it is so, and why should I doubt His words? He says, "This is my Body," and shall I deny it in His face? No.

I believe what He says. He says so; this is enough for me. Does He say, "This is my Body—this is my Blood?" He does. Does an inspired apostle say, "The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of Christ's Blood, and the bread which we break is the communion of Christ's Body?" He does. This is enough. I believe it. God says so. It is enough.

My feelings are not shocked either by the language employed, or by the sentiment which the language expresses, as some have asserted. It is not shocking to me to believe that Christ gives himself, after a sacramental and heavenly sort, to the communicant—His glorified self to me. I am not shocked by the *atonement* which is made for my sins by the shedding of Christ's *Blood* on the cross, but the doctrine is most welcome, and its influence is most cheering to my heart. I am not shocked that *water* in Baptism is the medium of the Holy Ghost's blessing, or that the *letter* of the Word is the channel through which divine truth reaches my mind; nor that Christ's divinity acted through the human *body* which He assumed when He was born of the Virgin Mary; nor that my

own immortal soul speaks and acts through my *tongue*, and *hands* and *feet*. None of these things are shocking to me, or wound my sensibilities, or awaken carnal and unworthy thoughts in my breast. Why then should I be shocked at the doctrine that in the Lord's Supper there are two kinds of elements, the bread and wine, and the Body and Blood of Christ, and that the heavenly and spiritual employs the earthly and material as the medium through which it is conveyed to my soul? Do I not see the same beautiful analogy here that runs through all the others? Is it not distinctly, and most plainly asserted in numerous texts? Instead of shocking me, is not the doctrine most beautiful, consistent, heavenly, and precious to my heart in the unspeakable blessings which it imparts, in the nearness to Christ which it effects, and in the delightful elevation of my soul above the earthly and visible, to the glorious heavenly and invisible things which it brings to view? The Lord's Supper would seem to me very tame, and even gross, indeed, if I saw in it nothing but the gross matter of bread and wine, but when I am called to look through and beyond these

earthly and material things, to the divine treasure which these earthen vessels contain and present to me, I am, in the highest degree, edified, comforted, and blest. These heavenly treasures, which are in the Holy Communion, on which my eye of faith fixes, as I partake of it with my lips, make this holy Lord's Table, the most precious of all other places in the world to me. Take this away, and I would be compelled to lament with Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

4. One of the commonest and most flippant objections we hear, is the assertion that *this doctrine is Romanism*.

It is want of acquaintance with what this doctrine really is, that leads any sincere man to make such a charge as this. They that make it, have perhaps never investigated the subject. They neither understand what the Bible teaches, nor what Rome teaches, nor wherein lies the difference between them. Such charges by such persons, do not for a moment disturb our composure. We

must do, in their case, as did the ancient advocate of a cause before Philip, appeal from Philip ill-informed, to Philip better informed. I flatter myself that all who have carefully followed me in the present discourse, will very readily be able to point out wherein the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper differs from the false doctrine of the Church of Rome on this subject. The difference is very great, and very plain.

Indeed, it is only from this standpoint of the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper as it is made known in the Scriptures, and confessed by the Lutheran Church, that the error of the Church of Rome can be successfully combated. This doctrine gives us the whole Sacrament, in both its terrestrial and heavenly elements; it does not take away the cup, nor does it change and take away the bread, and yet it gives us the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It leaves us Christ, and does not deem it necessary in order to avoid the error of Transubstantiation, to go to the other extreme, and banish Christ from his own Sacrament. It gives us the whole Sacrament, unmutilated, both in its earthly and heavenly ele-

ments, just as Christ instituted it, and the whole primitive Christian Church believed and practiced it. It is also directly in harmony with the words of Christ when instituting it, and with the words of the Apostle Paul when describing it. Most reflecting persons feel that a mere figurative representation does not accord with Christ's words, "This is my Body"—"This is my Blood," nor with the Apostle's strong declarations, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?" and "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord," and "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." If the Lord's Supper consisted of nothing but bread and wine, these strong expressions of Christ, and His holy apostle, would have no meaning. Why should Jesus have said, "Take, eat, this is my body—this do in remembrance of me," if no emphasis was intended to be laid on the words, "This is my body," but only on the words, "This

do in remembrance of me?" If it is not His Body, as He says it is, but only a commemorative eating, the words, "This is my body," might have been left away altogether, and all would have been expressed that those who take this view, contend it does. It would then say, "Take, eat, in remembrance of me." If this is all, why did Christ insert at all, the words, "This is my Body?" They that adopt this view commit the same mistake that the believers in Transubstantiation commit, only in the other direction. Transubstantiation takes away the bread, and professedly makes it all body. These, however, take away the body, and leave nothing but bread. In either case, we have only a part of a Sacrament. If they are censurable who take from us the earthly element, are those not equally censurable, who would deprive us of the heavenly? Is there not almost the same occasion to quote Paul's earnest words to them, as there was for him to utter them to the Church of Corinth? What answer can they make to him, when he asks, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?"

5. *It is objected that the Lutheran Church teaches the doctrine of Consubstantiation.*

The persistence with which the doctrine of Consubstantiation is charged upon the Lutheran Church, in the face of her constant denial of it, in her Confessions, and by her theologians, is wonderful. It would seem that her opponents act upon the principle that a falsehood well stuck to, will in the end be accepted as truth. Even Webster, in his Unabridged Dictionary, defines Consubstantiation as the doctrine maintained by the Lutheran Church. It will be a conclusive answer to this charge, to quote the statements concerning it, of some of the oldest and ablest of our theologians. I cite from Dr. Krauth's Conservative Reformation:

Hutter, A. D. 1611, says, "When we use the particles 'in, with, under,' we understand no local inclusion whatever, either Transubstantiation or Consubstantiation." "Hence is clear the odious falsity of those who charge our churches with teaching that 'the bread of the Eucharist is literally and substantially the body of Christ;' that 'the bread and body constitute one substance;'

that 'the body of Christ in itself, and literally, is bruised by the teeth,' and all other monstrous absurdities of a similar nature. For we fearlessly appeal to God, the Searcher of hearts, and the Judge of consciences, as an infallible witness, that neither by Luther nor any of ours was such a thing ever said, written, or thought of."

Andrew Osiander, Chancellor of the University of Tübingen, A. D. 1617, says, "Our theologians for years long have strenuously denied and powerfully confuted the doctrine of a local inclusion, or physical connection of the body and bread, or consubstantiation. We believe in no impanation, subpanation, companation, or consubstantiation of the body of Christ; no physical or local inclusion or conjoining of bread and body, as our adversaries, in manifest calumnies, allege against us."

John Gerhard, A. D. 1637, says, "On account of the calumnies of our adversaries, we would note that we do not believe in impanation, nor in consubstantiation, nor in any physical or local presence." "We believe in no consubstantiative presence of the body and the blood. Far from us be that figment. The heavenly thing and the earthly

thing in the Lord's Supper are not present with each other physically and naturally."

Carpzov, A. D. 1657, says, "When the words, in, with, under, are used, our traducers know, as well as they know their own fingers, that they do not signify a Consubstantiation, local coexistence, or impanation. The charge that we hold a local inclusion, or Consubstantiation, is a calumny. The eating and drinking are not physical, but mystical and sacramental."

Calovius, A. D. 1686, says, "We do not assert any local conjunction, any fusion of essences, or Consubstantiation, as our adversaries attribute it to us; as if we imagined that the bread and the Body of Christ pass into one mass. We do not say that the Body is included in the bread."

Baier, J. G., A. D. 1695, says, "The Sacramental union is neither substantial, nor personal, nor local. Hence it is manifest that impanation and Consubstantiation, which are charged upon Lutherans by enemies, are utterly excluded. There is no sensible or natural eating of the Body of Christ."

Leibnitz, A. D. 1716, distinguished as a profound theological thinker, as well as philosopher of the

highest order, says, "Those who receive the Evangelical (Lutheran) faith by no means approve the doctrine of Consubstantiation, or of impanation, nor can any impute it to them, unless from a misunderstanding of what they hold."

Buddeus, A. D. 1728, says, "All who understand the doctrines of our Church know that with our whole soul we abhor the doctrine of Consubstantiation, and of a gross ubiquity of the flesh of Christ. They are greatly mistaken who suppose the doctrine of impanation to be the doctrine of Luther and of our Church."

Cotta, A. D. 1779, makes the following remarks upon the different theories of Sacramental union: "By impanation is meant a local inclusion of the body and blood in the bread and wine. Gerhard has rightly noted that the theologians of our Church utterly abhor this error. The particles in, with, under, are not used to express a local inclusion. As our theologians reject impanation, so also they reject the doctrine of Consubstantiation. This word is taken in two senses. It denotes sometimes a local conjunction of two bodies; sometimes a commingling or coalescence into one sub-

stance or mass. But in neither sense can that monstrous dogma of Consubstantiation be attributed to our Church; for Lutherans believe neither in a local conjunction nor commixture of bread and Christ's Body, nor of wine and Christ's Blood."

These citations are sufficient. We need, and can have, no stronger or more conclusive testimony.

Having now stated the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and defended it from some of the objections with which it is commonly assailed, let me hasten to a few practical conclusions.

1. I will not doubt nor wrangle, but simply believe the Word of my Lord, and yield my reason to the Supreme Reason, in this, and all other doctrines, and ordinances, and institutions of the Gospel.

I am not offended because the Christian religion has its mysteries. That there should be in it things deep and unfathomable, was to have been expected from the nature of the subject, and from the infinite perfections of its divine Author. It would be, to my mind, bare, and meagre, and unattractive, and too much like the production of small men, who could not go beyond their own

shallow depth, if it had no mysteries. Its profound mysteries are not only exceedingly interesting, and reasonable, and even fascinating to my mind, but they constitute one of the most satisfactory proofs that its author is God, and its origin in heaven. I will not, therefore, dispute, and object, and find fault, but simply believe and humbly submit. I will take God at His own word, and not attempt to explain it away, or raise difficulties, nor oppose my own feeble reason to the Infinite reason, nor abuse what I do not understand, nor labor to make that look absurd which appears so only because it is too far above the reach of my limited capacities. There are more things in heaven and earth than have ever been dreamed of in our philosophy. Things are not necessarily false because incomprehensible. I will, therefore, not argue, but believe. I will not raise objections, but receive the truth of God, in the terms in which He has himself declared it. Christ has himself used the words, "This is my Body," "This is my Blood," "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood." The words awaken in my mind neither superstitious feelings, nor Romish

sentiments, nor carnal ideas. They are the words of my Lord, and I will use them, and hear them used, with the devout and holy reverence which they are adapted to produce.

2. I will endeavor always to commune with the solemn awe which the nature of the Holy Communion inspires.

Of all the ordinances of the Gospel, the Holy Communion is the most solemn. It possesses the highest sanctity, because the whole Gospel seems to centre in it; or rather it is the culmination of all the doctrines, facts, and precepts of the Gospel. "We are at the Lord's Table. We can rise no higher in this life. There is nothing beyond but heaven." With the ancient Patriarch we may say, "How dreadful is this place: this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." The nature of the Lord's Supper produces this solemn feeling. At the communion table I am in the presence of God. There I feel nearer to God than anywhere else. I welcome this feeling. I love to feel that God is near me, and that I am near to him. The feeling is hallow-

ing as well as pleasurable. It subdues my sins, it hallows my heart, it makes me better, it humbles self, it exalts Christ and His ordinances, it lifts me above the world, and it brings me nearer to heaven and the holy angels.

3. *I will sanctify my heart, and commune at the Lord's Table, with clean hands and pure lips, because the holy presence of the Lord demands it.*

Christ is present there. Nothing unholy or unclean should come into his presence. He is holy, and He requires all to be holy as He is holy. His ordinances are holy, and they tend to sanctify, and make holy, those who partake of them. There is an especial sanctity pervading the Lord's Supper. The atmosphere that surrounds it is holy, and it hallows all who come within its influence. I will keep the foot, and cleanse the heart, when I come to the table of the Lord. I will always, when there, remember where I am, and what I am doing. I will consider at whose table I am, who is near me, and whose eye is upon my heart. I will not tremble as a slave in the presence of a hard master, but I will humbly bow as

a child before the venerable form of a parent. I will cherish the awe which the place, and the presence inspire, and I will also entertain the joy which the occasion is adapted to awaken. I am an invited guest, and although I feel that I am an unworthy one, still I know that I am a welcome one. Not with awe alone, therefore, but with joy, also, will I draw water out of these wells of salvation. I will sanctify myself, for the feast; its author, its nature, its occasion, are all holy. I will come with clean hands, and a pure heart, and a soul that has not lifted itself up unto vanity. I will repent of all my sins, be sorry with true brokenness of heart on account of them, weep over my great unworthiness, confess and beg absolution on account of my manifold commissions of evil, and omissions of duty, fervently pray God to forgive and save me for Christ's sake, and humbly renew my vows of piety and obedience at His altar, earnestly relying upon the help of His grace to enable me to carry away from the Holy Communion table, such spiritual strength as will make, and ever keep me, a better and a happier Christian.



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